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History of Zorra and Embro





HISTORY
OF

Zorra

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Embro

PIONEER SKETCHES
of SIXTY YEARS AGO

By W. A. Ross

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ZORRA'S OLD LOG CHURCH, ERECTED 1832-3.

—From "Pioneer Life in Zorra," by Rev. W. A. MacKay, B.A., D.D.

By kind permission of the publisher, William Briggs.

History of
ZORRA ^A_N_D EMBRO

PIONEER SKETCHES

of

SIXTY YEARS AGO

By W. A. Ross

EMBRO :
EMBRO COURIER OFFICE
1909

W. H. R. 18

ZORRA & EMBRO

PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION

OF THE PROVINCE OF

THE PROVINCE OF

INTRODUCTION.

It is with some misgivings that the author presents these historical events in collected form. Readers of this history and story will not find herein much of what is styled fine writing, but a plain account of such things and events related of the early days of Zorra up to the present time which may be of interest to young and old throughout Zorra and to those Zorraites who are abroad.

The author desires to tender thanks to the following gentlemen for the kindly assistance rendered him in compiling this history and for the courteous treatment accorded him by Messrs. A. L. Murray, A. G. McKay, E. J. Cody, Col. Munro and R. A. Duncan.

Donald Cameron, an old and respected friend of the author, is a man possessed of a tenacious memory. Born in Zorra in the early days of its settlement, he has witnessed its religious, social, and commercial life in their various changes and innovations from that early period to the present time. Therefore, the reader can rely upon the truth of this story related to me by my friend, which ends with the chapter on Social Life.

W. A. R.

HISTORY OF ZORRA AND EMBRO

CHAPTER I.

MY FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

'Twas a still clear night, with the moon nearly full riding high in a cloudless sky, throwing into bold relief against it the rugged outlines of the hills rising higher and higher to the north, till one or two peaks seemed almost to touch it.

At the foot of the orchard lay the mill-pond looking calm and peaceful, not a ripple upon its surface.

No breath of wind stirred the leaves of the beautiful maples on either side of the valley.

My friend, Donald Cameron, and I sat out upon his verandah, surveying the lovely scene in silence. There had been a lull in our conversation for some minutes,—doubtless both felt the soothing influence of that June night.

My friend sat with elbows on both knees, smoking his pipe with that far away look in his eyes that was habitual with him, whilst rapt in deep thought.

During the earlier part of the evening, whilst in a reminiscent mood, he related to me an event which occurred at McLeod's shanty on a winter's night in

the early '60's. That little incident related to me by my friend started a new train of thought that here was a good opportunity of learning something of the early days which might be of interest to the old and young throughout the Zorras and to natives of Zorra who have gone abroad.

At length I startled my friend out of his reverie. "Tell me something of your early life," I entreated.

Ever ready to converse about the old days, my friend straightened up, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, then proceeded to refill it.

"My father was only sixteen when he arrived in this country from Sutherlandshire, Scotland, in the early thirties.

"Upon arriving in this country with his mother, brother and sister, they came by way of the St. Lawrence River with other settlers, then by overland route until they reached Toronto, remaining there a few days for rest and to obtain some necessities for further travel. They came on to Woodstock by what was known as the old Hamilton and London road; from Woodstock they travelled by blazed trail to within a mile or two of Embro.

"He lived there with his mother, brother and sister for four or five years, when he married and with his wife moved up on the sixth concession of Zorra a few miles above Embro.

"At that period Embro comprised only three families: Donald Mathison, postmaster; Colonel Dent, merchant and distiller; James Adams, shoemaker.

"When my parents settled on the sixth concession there were only a few families of McKays in that community.

"My father soon made a small clearing and erected a log shanty divided into two rooms, 'the but' and 'the ben.' The openings between the

logs were filled with moss, then daubed with clay. At one end of the shanty was a big fire-place with a couple of flat stones on which to place the fire-wood. A bar of iron attached to hinges was placed horizontally over the fire, on which one or two pots could be suspended.

"The bread was baked in a flat-bottomed pot called the bake kettle. It had an iron lid and a handle to lift it by. The table and chairs were made of rough lumber in which holes were bored and legs fitted in. The roof was constructed of basswood logs hollowed out and laid alongside each other; then others laid upon these with hollow side down so as to overlap those underneath. There were two windows, each with four panes of glass. The most of our cutlery was brought from the old country.

"All of our family were born on that farm; there were five of us, I being the only boy.

"I have no recollection of events until I was between four and five years of age. When I arrived at that period of my life, my father, by dint of hard work had cleared about fifty acres and set out an orchard. The future looked bright and promising. We were beginning to enjoy more the comforts of life, when an event happened which changed perhaps the whole course of our lives. One afternoon of an early spring day two strangers drove in from the concession line. The advent of strangers was something new in that district. We youngsters were curious to know who they were and what their business was, but they shunned us and drew my father aside and in an authoritative tone informed my father that he must vacate the farm we were on. My father asked the reason. He was told the deed he received from the former owner of the property wasn't valid; that his title wasn't legal.

"Eventually there was an irregularity about it

that I never fully understood. In those days they were somewhat lax in the registering of deeds; however, there was no alternative for my father but to leave. It was a terrible blow to him after all the years of toil and self-denial in trying to make a home for himself and the family. He was disheartened and broken in spirit and I don't think he was ever the same man after.

"He was compelled to set out immediately to purchase another farm. He heard of this one we are on at present, and after looking it over decided to locate there, and he saw to it that the deed was legally registered. He had learned a sad lesson and determined to profit by it. He remained a few days building a log shanty before we would move up. When he returned we prepared to move our few household goods. Those were busy days for my parents, as we children were too small to be of much assistance. My father had a large two-wheeled cart and it was in this rather clumsy vehicle we moved our household possessions, drawn by two oxen.

"We made two or three trips before everything was removed. On one of these trips I went up to my new home for the first time. Two of my sisters accompanied my father and me, and on the journey up we skirted the swamps to the north of Brooksdale. The road at that time lay across the front of Symon's farm, over that high elevation known as 'the hogback.'

"While making that trip I discovered to my intense delight a box of sweetened oatmeal cakes stowed away by my mother in a little box in one corner of the cart. I wasn't long in extracting one from its hiding-place, and to escape the vigilant eyes of my sisters and the stern rebuke of my father I leaned out over the side of the cart to eat it at my

leisure, when suddenly my cap fell off. It was one I was very proud of, as it was a present from my uncle. I lost all interest in the oatmeal cake and straightway set up a howl that would do justice to a Comanche Indian. The cart stopped and one of my sisters recovered the cap for me, and she also detected oatmeal crumbs in the vicinity of my mouth. Needless to say, the box of those delicious cakes was safely guarded during the remainder of the journey. In the course of the week we were settled in our new home, and my parents began once more to face the vicissitudes of pioneer life in the heart of the forest."

CHAPTER II.

THE LOGGING BEE.

“ ’Twas the year ’48 we moved up and settled on this farm we are on at present.

“ By that time quite a number of families had settled in the Zorras. The first of these, chiefly U. E. Loyalists, lived in East Zorra and to the south and west of the village of Embro, a few north of the village on the fourth concession.

“ In East Zorra were the Randells, Harringtons, Landerlips, Warwicks, Matthews, Thompsons, Bundays, Merrills, Lands, Edgertons, Jacobs, Bodwells and Witheys.

“ To the south and west of Embro, Codys, Burdicks, Alyeas, Tafts, Harris’s, Karns, Cooks, Days, Hallocks, Fords, Lewis’s, Coukes, Deans, Gallows, Walkers, Aldridges and Mitchells.

“ To the north of Embro, on the fourth concession, the Hodginsons, Wilkinsons, Reids and Youngs.

“ There were thirteen families of McKays settled on the sixth concession north of Embro, that section of Zorra known as ‘ Little Ireland.’ How that district came by that name I have not been able to find out. Many of the McKays arrived there from Sutherlandshire a year or two prior to our moving up here.

“ There was John McKay, the late W. A. McKay’s father; William G. McKay, for a long time license inspector for the North Riding of Oxford. There was also another William McKay; Angus and Thomas McKay; the Gordon family—Colin, Donald

and Robert; W. A. G. Sutherland, who is still active in his duties as sanitary inspector; John Sutherland (Ramsay). In addition to those in Embro I've mentioned before, three more men started business in Embro: John Fraser and Thomas Walsh, grocers, and Wm. Midgley, shoemaker; a Mr. Laycock, who erected the oatmeal mill which D. R. Ross owns at present. J. M. Ross, father of Columbus and D. R. Ross, erected a mill to the south of Embro, known as the Scotia Mills. Mr. Ross was a contractor in the States before starting business here.

"To the east of Embro lived Alexander Matheson, elder; Charles McKay, John McKay, elder; Squire Gordon; Robert Matheson, elder; John Bruce; Donald McKay; Alexander Murray (father of A. L. Murray, so well known throughout Zorra); William, Alexander and Hugh Campbell, whose many descendants now live east of Embro; Robert Matheson, elder; Alexander Ross, collector on the sixth concession; John Ross; Wm. Murray; John McKay; Robert McKay (Gow); David Ross (father of John Ross, Brucefield); Alexander Sutherland (Kirkhill); and William Logan, on the eleventh concession; John McDonald, on the tenth concession; William Fraser and George McKay, on the ninth; and John McLeod and James Young on the eighth concession. William Murray, Hector Ross, Donald McLeod (precentor), Donald Urquart, William McKay ("Captain") then lived on the ninth.

"To the west of Embro there lived James Munroe (Colonel Munroe's father), Charles Munroe, the McPhersons, McCauls, McArthurs, McCorqudales and Sutherlands, near the Governor's road. In the vicinity of Bennington, Joseph Ross, Benson Pelton, Robert Duncan, who owned the sawmill, and William Hull, from Bennington, Vermont, naming that village after his native town in that State.

“On the third concession north of Embro were John Matheson (farmer), John Ross (shepherd), Hugh Matheson (cheesemaker), John Innis, Alexander Innis, Robert Ross, Murdoch McLellan, Kenneth Cameron, Hugh McKay (Peter McKay’s father), William Melville (a well-digger), George Grigg, Angus Reid, a brother of Duncan Reid. He was what was termed ‘a squatter,’—a temporary resident—one who had not taken up any land. There were also Duncan Reid, George McLeod (the late Dr. McLeod’s father), and Anthony Morris.

“On the fourth concession lived Hugh Campbell, Paul Gordon, ‘Yankee’ Wilson, who was also ‘a squatter,’ Colonel Burwick, Alexander Kerr, Hugh Matheson, Jacob Bellinger (a noted hunter and trapper). John Dingman lived on the farm owned at one time by William Reid. James Reid (father of Duncan and William Reid), Solomon, George and Joseph Reed, Robert White and Alexander Wood, U. E. Loyalists, occupied farms in the vicinity of Brooksdale. Gabriel Youngs purchased a thousand acres where Youngsville now is, that place being named after him. On the same concession lived Neil McKay, Ebenezer Sutherland (father of Colin Sutherland), the Wilkinsons and the Hodginsons. At the northeast of the township were William Murray and Angus McKenzie.

“A man by the name of Demerest owned a saw-mill where the village of Harrington now is. North of that village lived Weston Allen and Ned Flettler; a mile east of the village was Alexander Ross; south, on the second concession, was John B. McKay, who still lives at the good old age of ninety-four, and his brother, William, Robert Munroe, Robert Murray (Mason), John McKay (“Captain”), Alexander Sutherland and Colin Sutherland.

“Those were the settlers living in the Zorras at that period. There are only three or four of those living at the present time,” my friend added.

“What occupied your time subsequent to your settling up here?” I inquired, after a pause. “Were there any schools in this part of Zorra at that time?”

“Ah, yes,” my friend replied, “there was a log school over on the fourth concession. My two elder sisters attended, but I was considered too young at that time. My time was spent pretty much the same as other children. My two younger sisters and I assisted my mother in supplying her with fire-wood and bringing her water from the spring. When that work was done we would run off to play.

“We would wade through the creek that flows down through the valley here and play hide and seek among the pussy willows that edged the creek; frequently I climbed trees after squirrels. Often we would vary our day’s sport by making little trips into the forest,—not very far, though, as our parents warned us not to venture too far into the woods, as we might easily become lost; consequently we would keep within hearing of our father’s axe. During these trips we would race over fallen logs, through bramble and briar. The result of those races would be torn clothes, hands and faces scratched. When tiring of that exercise we would gather wood violets, wild orchids and mandrake parasols. We would return home very hungry after those excursions into the forest.

“The second year we were here, my father hired Angus Reid, brother of Duncan Reid, to assist him in clearing about four acres. When they had finished falling and trimming the trees, my father decided to have a logging bee. He sent word to his old

neighbors (the McKays, in 'Little Ireland'), to come up, and also asked those in this neighborhood to be there. A logging bee was an event new to me, and I looked forward to it with a great deal of interest.

"I might here explain the method they had in those days of preparing for a logging bee. The trees were made to fall in the same direction, if possible. If a chopper thought a tree was about to fall across the others that were down, a spring pole was placed in such a position that it would cause the tree to fall in or near the spot so desired. Of course all the cutting was done those days by axes, as there were no saws; and to save a great deal of chopping I've seen those old settlers 'niggar' the fallen logs,—that is, they would build a small fire on top of the fallen log of chips, bits of brush and material of that nature, and keep it burning until it was burnt through. That would save the work of chopping it into suitable lengths.

"It was a weird sight to see perhaps a score of those fires burning at night with the gloom of the forest all around us.

"When the trees were trimmed, cut or 'nig-gared,' the ground would be staked out for a bee, very often in acre lots, as logging an acre was considered a good day's work for a gang of men.

"On this occasion, my father and Angus Reid staked out two one-acre lots and had everything prepared the day before the bee.

"Our neighbors, being the first to arrive in the morning, as a consequence had the first choice of lots. They were followed in about an hour by the McKays from 'Little Ireland.' Some of them brought their wives with them, and some of the women of our neighborhood came to assist my mother in preparing the meals. There was a great

deal of handshaking among them and inquiries after one another's health, principally in Gaelic.

"It was about eight o'clock when the work began. The McKays came up, confident they would win in clearing their strip before the others. The men of our neighborhood were determined not to be beaten on their own ground. They were fortunate in having a skillful teamster in the person of Jimmy Matheson, better known to us as 'King' Matheson. He was only a young lad then, but he was reputed to be one of the best teamsters in Zorra.

"Each gang had only one yoke of oxen, but they were trained so well that they seemed to know instinctively where to go. Before the race began I remember Jimmy Matheson mounting a stump to observe better the position of the logs and where to use his oxen to the best advantage.

"My father was boss of the work, giving the necessary directions where he wished the piles to be. I followed the race with great interest. Jimmy Matheson was the object of my admiration, because of the manner in which he handled his oxen, and how quickly he would fasten the chain on the log to give it the proper roll and then bring it from among the others to the place where they were to be piled.

"The first hour or two there wasn't much work for the men at the piles to do, but as the piles became higher it required all their strength to force them up the skids. They did that with the aid of handspikes, two men on a stout handspike at each end of a log, the rest in the centre between the skids. When a pile became too high for them they began at another. Toward noon the heat was terrific down here in the valley, surrounded on all sides by the forest, without the faintest breeze to

fan them, but they kept steadily at it, although it must have been very trying to those men. When they went to dinner they were about even in the race, as both teamsters hadn't gained much advantage over the other. An hour's rest at noon freshened them up for their further efforts, and they resumed their work with unabated vigor, and as the afternoon wore on the excitement increased. The McKays were putting forth all their efforts to win. As older settlers and more experienced men at logging bees, it would be to their everlasting disgrace to be beaten by men who had been settled here only a short time and had very little experience. The shouting increased in volume as evening approached. From the McKays' quarter could be heard, 'Roll her up! Skid her up! Yo heave!' as there was an unusually big log to roll up. Some of the shouting was in Gaelic, some in English. From the home gang could be heard shouts of encouragement or reproof as occasion demanded. Duncan Reid and his partner had a disagreeable habit of pushing on their end of a log before the word was given. They would lift so vigorously and so suddenly that the others were in danger of being injured, whether it was under pressure of excitement or not. Duncan and his partner were the means of hindering the work to a considerable extent by not working in unison with the others.

"'Yankee' Wilson's patience became exhausted. He ceased work, rolled his quid of tobacco from one side of his mouth to the other, and exclaimed, 'Can't you take it easy, Dunc, you old fool? I reckon you'll be the cause of some of us being killed here today, through your blamed nonsense!' When 'Yankee' had delivered himself of that rebuke, punctuated with more adjectives which I've not written down here, he resumed work. At that same

instant Jimmy Matheson with his oxen arrived with a log at the pile, and, seeing how matters stood, said, 'Take it cool, Dunc. We've got them beaten!' And by Jimmy's appearance and actions he was the least concerned as to the outcome of the race of anyone there. Nevertheless, as both were nearing the ends of their strips, many an anxious glance was cast towards each other's strip by those rival teamsters.

"At about half-past six o'clock each was fastening his chain on his last log. Both started for their respective piles at the same instant. At the shouts from the teamsters both gangs ceased their work, awaiting eagerly the result of the race.

"The driver from the McKay settlement gradually gained on Jimmy Matheson and was nearing the pile when, passing a huge maple stump, the log came in contact with one of the projecting roots. His oxen came suddenly to a stop; two of his gang came quickly to his assistance with handspikes. It took them only a few moments to move the log away from the root, but too late! Jimmy Matheson had arrived at the pile, and with a cheer the men soon had it skidded to the top and the race was won.

"I don't think there was any ill-feeling between the two gangs over the result. Before they went to supper they were scarcely recognizable. Their faces and hands were blackened through handling the burnt logs. After having a wash and partaking of their supper they were as happy as though they hadn't been at a bee and worked hard all day.

"That was the way logging was done those days, and it was absolutely necessary to have those bees in order to aid one another to clear their farms, and it was a welcome change to many of them who were isolated for weeks back in the bush."

CHAPTER III.

THE LOG SCHOOL IN THE BUSH.

The following week again found me a visitor with my friend, Donald Cameron, whom I found in his accustomed seat on the verandah.

I was about to take my place beside him, when he arose and bade me come away in, as it was chilly out here. I felt the truth of his assertion, as it was unusually cool for the month of June.

As we entered the kitchen, my friend drew up two arm-chairs near the stove, stirred up the dying embers of the fire, then sat down and proceeded to light his pipe. "You want some information about my school days, do you?" said my friend, after I had made the object of my visit known to him. My friend smoked in silence for a few moments, as in deep thought.

"My father, like the other pioneers, was desirous of giving his children as good an education as was possible to obtain in those days," my friend began.

"There have been great improvements and innovations in the art of teaching since I went to school. There is nothing which gives to my mind so vivid an idea of the changes that have taken place since my time, as the talk of our children about their studies at school. I can hardly help wondering how heads so small can hold so much.

"The reading, writing and arithmetic are, perhaps not better than they had them in my time, but when it comes to history, literature and sciences I am astonished. Teaching in the old days, it seems to me, was a simple process. Take a boy



THE SETTLER'S OLD LOG CABIN.



BENNINGTON SCHOOL NO. 3. R. DARLING, Teacher.

six or seven years of age: give him his lessons, lick him well when he did not learn them, repeat the process almost every day for six or seven years, and he would then be considered educated. And yet, defective as it seemed, boys and girls were then educated, and well educated. While this system was practised at that time, Zorra's sons and daughters obtained a name throughout the length and breadth of the country for their intellectual acquirements. From among those Zorra boys were men of talent and genius of whom we well might be proud. Wherever most of them have gone, they obtained situations of trust, and often rose here and in other lands to offices of the highest dignity and honor, and many of those boys and girls holding high positions in all walks of life today were trained in those schools of discipline and, perhaps, rude methods,—studying at night only by the light of a candle.

“But I will not be comparing the old system with the modern methods of educating the young; but we'll discuss the growth of our educational system later on.

“It was in the spring of '51 when I started to school. I shall never forget that first day. Where is there a boy who doesn't remember his first day at school? That first day is as vivid to me as if it were yesterday. My mother prepared our noon lunch, and with much gentle advice and counsel to be careful and conduct myself properly and a warning to my sisters to watch over me during the day, we started for the school, my sisters on either side of me, holding me by the hands.

“We entered the blazed trail that marked our path through the forest to the school, which was situated on the south-west corner of the farm now owned by George McKenzie. Occasionally a deer

would be seen galloping away on hearing our approach. The only sounds to be heard would be the harsh 'me-ouw' of the cat-bird or perhaps the soft trilling of the hermit thrush.

"At length we arrived at the clearing in the centre of which the old log school stood. It was a long, low building, chinked with moss and then plastered with clay, but to me that day it appeared an imposing structure. As we entered, everything seemed strange to me. There were two rows of rough board benches running parallel with the walls. Desks were attached to the walls about four feet from the floor, made of rough planks resting on pins driven into holes in the log. There was another row of benches on either side. The ones nearer the wall were used by the older pupils, the outside ones for the younger boys and girls. A large box stove occupied the centre of the floor, for use during the winter months. The teacher's desk stood at one end of the room. Everything about the room was kept scrupulously clean.

"The teacher, whose name was Murdock McLellan ('Murdie,' we called him), hadn't arrived until after we did. In the meantime my arrival aroused considerable interest among the boys and girls. I was compelled to answer questions which caused me no little embarrassment,—as to what age I was, didn't I know any of their games, and hadn't I learnt anything before I came to school. At length the teacher's arrival put an end to their questions. I stood greatly in awe of him. He was an austere man,—tall and dark featured, and walked with a long rapid stride. He immediately summoned the pupils to their places. The boys occupied benches on one side of the room, the girls on the other. Of the pupils besides my sisters there were the Gunn boys, Angus and Hugh, the Armstrong boys,

George Matheson, the McKenzie boys, 'Yankee' Wilson's boys, Duncie and Jack; Wilfrid McCombs, Donald Manson's girls, Dollie Gordon, Jack McKay and John and Robert Conway. While the pupils were taking their seats, I quietly sat on the girls' side near my sisters, as I suspected the boys were about to play some trick on me.

"The teacher opened the duties of the day by reading a chapter out of the Bible and prayer. That over, he was about to teach his first class, when he espied me. He must have been surprised at seeing me sitting on the girls' side of the room, but though he appeared astonished I was permitted to retain my seat among the girls. He inquired my age and also if I had any brothers. I answered, 'Yes, sir,' at the same instant pointing to my two sisters, which caused considerable giggling among the girls and subdued laughter on the boys' side. Even the teacher could scarcely suppress a smile, but with a little more cross-questioning I acknowledged I had no brothers. Then he proceeded with the lessons. Each class was taken up in rotation, and so much time was devoted to each. There were first, second, third, fourth and fifth classes. The principal subjects those days were reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic. The textbooks were Mavor's spelling book, Gray's arithmetic. The name of the reader I do not remember.

"Each pupil in the school was compelled to commit to memory two or three verses of the Psalms for Monday morning. During recess I was the butt of much ridicule from some of the boys in reference to my sitting with the girls. Two brothers, Angus and Hugh Gunn, were the most annoying. I took it as good-naturedly as possible. At the noon hour, however, Angus Gunn continued his sarcastic remarks until I could endure it no

longer. I attacked him so suddenly that he was sent sprawling on the ground. He was up in an instant, and we mixed it pretty freely for a few minutes. We were about of a size although he was about a year older than I. We struggled fiercely for some time to the delight of the other boys present. My oponent chanced to turn half around, when I delivered a kick on the posterior part of his anatomy. He immediately began to cry, and for some reason or other I began to cry, too, and that ended our fight, to the disappointment of the boys. The teacher heard of it in some unaccountable way, and when school was called at one o'clock Angus and I were summoned to his desk. 'You boys were fighting, weren't you? Hold out your hands. I'll teach you to act like cats and dogs,' he exclaimed in a voice of thunder. To say I was frightened and received fearful punishment would be putting it mildly. I can almost feel the sting of that strap yet.

"When school was dismissed at four o'clock Angus and I had forgotten our differences and we were the best of friends, and have remained so ever after. I was rather proud of my part in the affair, and related it to my parents when I arrived home, but they sternly reproved me for the part I had taken in it."

CHAPTER IV.

MY SCHOOL DAYS.

“ Previous to 1838 there were only three schools in the township ; one on lot eight, concession eight, known as Piper McKay’s school, taught by Hugh Gordon. The trustees were John Dent and George McDonald. Another was in the south-west corner of the sideline and the fourth concession south of Embro, taught by Lewis Hyde. The trustees were Leonard Lewis, O. Lewis and G. W. Harris. The third was taught by Hugh Matheson in the first log house built by Squire Gordon, situated on the old Squire Gordon farm. The trustees of that school were L. Crittenden, Alexander Wood and Wm. Walsh. When Hugh Matheson considered he had the necessary qualifications to teach, he applied to the Rev. Donald McKenzie for permission to teach in the old log church. Mr. McKenzie was willing so far as he was concerned, but he thought it would be better to submit it to the church officers. So, telling Hugh Matheson there would be a monthly prayer meeting in the near future, and for him to attend, Mr. McKenzie promised he would lay the matter before them. Hugh Matheson attended that night, and, when the meeting was dismissed, Mr. McKenzie requested the trustees and elders to remain for a few minutes, as he had some business to submit to them. He told them in a few words and asked them their opinion on the matter. One speaker said the proposition was too ridiculous to think of ; another spoke up and said this was God’s temple and his house of prayer, and by giving in

to this offer would only make it a house of noisy brats; a third said that such an offer was bordering on blasphemy.

“The minister then announced that the use of the church was refused for that purpose, but Hugh Matheson was not discouraged. He was determined to teach school if it were possible to secure some building for that purpose. At length he opened one in the first small log house built by Squire Gordon. Previous to the time I attended school there was no system of school sections,—a school was erected wherever there were families enough to support a teacher. In a great many instances the teacher boarded among the settlers and was paid about eight or ten dollars a month. The amount each settler subscribed was in proportion to the number of children he would send. However, about a year before I started to school, 1850, Ryerson’s Free School System was introduced, but it was some time after that we received any benefit from it.

“December of ’51 marked the close of Murdie McLellan’s regime. I don’t know whether we were pleased or sorry. He was very severe, but he was just. Perhaps if he could have had more words of encouragement and treated us a little more affectionately and still retained a firm discipline, he would have secured more of our love and respect. However, I don’t think any of us bore him any ill-will afterwards,—in fact, subsequent to our new teacher taking up his duties we had almost forgotten him.

“We were elated when we heard our new teacher was to be Hugh McLeod (the late Doctor McLeod). We concluded that he, being one of the boys of our own settlement, we would be on familiar terms with him and that he would overlook many of our mis-

chievous pranks, but in that we were sorely disappointed. Hugh McLeod ruled with a firm hand. He wasn't so unreasonable as Murdie McLellan, but he applied the taws when it was needed and in such a manner that it would be remembered, but withal he was ever ready with words of encouragement and cheer to those of us who were diligent at our lessons. We feared but held him in great respect. Although he was a disciplinarian of the old school, we were allowed considerable freedom hitherto denied us by Murdie McLellan.

"The first day we were permitted to go down to an Indian encampment on the bush farm afterwards owned by John McLeod.

"These Indians made annual visits to that neighborhood from the Brantford reservation. We became so absorbed in watching the Indian boys shooting black squirrels with arrows that it was nearly two o'clock when we realized that we were late for school.

"We hurried as fast as we could in time to receive a good flogging from the teacher that we remembered the remainder of the day. When school was dismissed at four o'clock 'Yankee' Wilson's son Duncan (Duncie, we called him), exclaimed: 'Gee! isn't he a terror! dang him! he had better not go too far or dad'll 'tend to him!' Duncie had infinite faith in his father's prowess.

"I made good progress under Hugh McLeod's teaching. I recovered from my bashfulness entirely and was now sitting with the boys. Angus Gunn was my inseparable companion. We became greatly interested in the habits and customs of the Indians. We made daily visits to their camps and gradually became on familiar terms with the Indian boys and and girls. We admired their skillful shooting with

the bows and arrows. We would gather around their camp and watch the squaws weaving baskets and mingle with the older men as they lounged about their lodges, smoking their pipes and conversing among themselves in their own language, and stroll about the camps, examining the deer skins and hams of venison that hung about in profusion. Frequently on coming and going from school we would meet one of these Indians dragging a deer by means of a harness made of basswood bark, which fitted neatly about his waist and shoulders. Attached to this was a stout rope of the bark, which was secured about the deer's carcass. It was a strange sight to us at first. We gathered about him while he rested, to examine it closely, but the Indian paid no heed to us; but we were accustomed to their stoical manner by this time. After resting a few minutes he proceeded on to the camp.

"One day at noon hour, in the spring of '53, when our teacher had gone to dinner, we wandered into the forest on the farther side of the Indian encampment to within a short distance of a clearing, where lived a settler by the name of Angus Kerr. He was reputed to be an ill-tempered man. We rather feared him; consequently we didn't venture into the clearing. That spring he had tapped a great number of maple trees. His sap-troughs — there being no sap-buckets those days — were full, as there was a good run of sap that spring. We stooped down on our hands and knees to drink our fill of sap out of the troughs. We were enjoying ourselves thoroughly, when suddenly we heard a shout. At the same instant we heard Jimmy Reid exclaim 'Here he comes!' We looked, and to our consternation we beheld Kerr coming at a fast pace, with a long beech rod in his hand. We had the advantage of having a good start, and I don't think

I ran as fast before or since. He gradually gained on us, and we were none too soon in reaching the school. We entered with a rush and slammed the door in his face. That appeared to irritate him the more. He secured a stout pole among the stumps outside, and proceeded to use it as a battering ram on the door. We had nothing to barricade the door with, and in a few moments it came off its hinges and fell in with a crash. We expected Kerr to rush in on us, but Jim Reid, the McKenzie and Armstrong boys presented such a bold front that Kerr concluded 'discretion was the better part of valor,' and after soundly rating us for a pack of thieves and young upstarts, and also that he would inform the teacher on us, he turned and walked away. Then we began to realize the awful consequences of our escapade. At length the teacher arrived, and observing the door off its hinges he flew into a towering rage and inquired of us as to how it happened. We told him that Kerr had chased us from the clearing; that we weren't doing any harm. We were careful not to mention our drinking of the sap. He appeared to be satisfied with our explanation and dispatched Geordie Matheson for Donald Manson to repair the door. By the middle of the afternoon everything was running smoothly again, and we breathed more freely, our courage having returned. At recess, opinions differed widely as to the punishment meted out to Kerr. If he should have entered the school some of us would have jumped on his back, and others of us would have tackled him in front and 'He would have had no chance at all,' said Geordie Matheson. 'We wouldn't need to do that,' answered Duncie Wilson. 'Jimmy Reid could down him alone, couldn't you, Jim?' enquired Duncie, turning to Jim. Jim answered doubtfully that he didn't know. 'Why, dang it, dad could

handle him, hisself, with one hand tied behind his back!' Duncie added triumphantly.

"But with all our boasting that incident ended our visits to Kerr's sap-troughs. We were careful to go only as far as the Indian camp.

"Our studies were not confined to school hours. We were given lessons to study at nights. The children nowadays call it 'home work.' We gathered about the table after supper and studied by the light of the candle. Occasionally we would be interrupted by some neighbor who would drop in for a 'ceildh' (a neighboring visit). The conversation between my parents and the visitor would often be carried on in Gaelic, concerning the clearing to be done that year,—the sermon on the preceding Sabbath,—the latest news from the old sod, or the latest event in the neighborhood, such as a logging bee. On leaving the visitor would say 'beauuachd leibh'—'blessing with you.' My parents would answer, 'Beauuachd leibh fein'—'blessing with yourself.'

"Hugh McLeod taught our school four years until '55, when he resigned. His purpose was to attend lectures at the Medical College, Toronto.

"Before school opened again it was rumored about that the trustees had engaged another teacher, who was a stranger to this part of the country, and no one knew if he had friends or relatives in this country. When our school opened the first week in January our new teacher proved to be an Irishman by the name of Paul Henry—a man about sixty-five or seventy years of age, short of stature, of a quick, impulsive manner. His speech betrayed a little of the Hibernian accent. When he flew into a passion, which was not often, his speech had the true Irish brogue.

"His one great fault was being too intimate with the bottle. We never saw him under the influence

of liquor during school hours, but we came to know when he had had one of his drinking bouts, for he would invariably doze off and sleep about two hours on the following day.

“On the opening day our new teacher summoned us to our places by means of a ruler beaten loudly upon the door-post. It was astonishing how far that would resound through the forest. There being no school bells those days, that was the manner in which the teacher called us in mornings, noons and recess. When prayer was over the teacher startled the little tots by exclaiming, ‘First class, attention! Come forward!’ They were somewhat nervous under the new order of things. They were taught their lesson in pretty much the same way in which the other teachers had done, but when it came to the third, fourth and fifth classes, the method was different. They were taught to sing their reading lessons that were in verse form and also the fifth class geography lesson.

“‘You see,’ said Paul Henry, ‘it’s imperative. It impresses these lessons more upon the mind.’

“‘Now this is the tune you must sing to.’ And he hummed an air over several times. The name of the tune was ‘Baden polka.’ Some learnt the tune quickly; others didn’t.

“This is an illustration how we were to commit to memory the countries of Asia, singing it to that air:

Arabia, Tartary, China, Malacca,
Turkey, British India and Afaghanstan;
Siam, Cochin China, Thibet, Burmah, and Persia,
Syria, Siberia and Beluchistan.

And also the rivers of America:

Amazon, St. Lawrence, Rio’d’ La Platta;
Nelson, McKenzie and O-hi-o;
Hudson, Missouri, and Mississi-ppi;
Potomac, Connecticut and Teness-ee.

After that first day a passer-by would naturally conclude we were holding a singing school instead of a well-regulated public school. When we learnt the tune better we would sing our lessons at the highest pitch of our voices.

"During that first day, when we had had our lessons, our teacher laid his head upon his arms on the desk, and was soon fast asleep, as evidenced by the loud snoring. We were all so astonished and everything became so still that one could hear a pin drop. The boys began to exchange looks of wonder and enquiry. Jack McKay leaned over towards us and whispered, 'What is wrong with him?' 'It must be that sleepin' sickness,' Duncie Wilson replied. 'What is that?' inquired Angus Gunn. 'Danged if I know,' answered Duncie; 'Dad knows. He says there are people down in Africa or somewheres that take sleepin' spells like that until they die.' 'Gosh! it would be awful if he 'd die now while he's like that,' said Angus. 'Will we go home and leave him here?' Jack McKay whispered in a low tone. 'No, that wouldn't do,' Angus replied. One of us would have to run across for Donald Manson. He would know what to do. Thus we waited, speculating upon the result of our teacher's attack of somnolence, wondering if it would prove fatal or not. However, in about the space of an hour he awakened, Rip-Van-Winkle like, and looked rather shamefacedly towards the scholars and dismissed us for the noon hour.

"While we ate our dinner we discussed in low tones the strange behavior of our teacher. 'I know what was the matter with him,' said Wilfrid McCombs. 'He was too free with the bottle last night. He brings home a supply with him every Satuardy night and locks it in his trunk. He boards at our place,' Wilfrid explained, 'and when he goes to sleep

tomorrow I am going to skip out.' So from that hour we plotted to take advantage of poor Henry's somnolent periods. The following day the singing went on with more vigor as we learnt the time better, and Henry went to sleep again. We began to steal out one by one until all the boys were out. We chose sides and had a pitched battle of snow-balling through the woods. In about two hours we distinctly heard the ruler, rapping on the door-post. 'I wonder what he'll do to us,' said Geordie Matheson while we were returning. 'Oh, he can't scare me,' exclaimed Angus McKenzie with an air of bravado. 'Are those old taws in the desk that McLeod had?' Jack McKay inquired anxiously. 'I think they are,' answered Hugh Gunn. 'Just give him the impression you don't give a rap,' said Jim Reid, 'and we'll be boss of him after this.'

"When we appeared at the door we knew he was angry, as his face was redder than usual. 'Come in here, ye spalpeens!' he shouted. 'Shure, but you're losing all sinse of dacincy, running out like this during school hours. I'll see ye don't get out ag'n neglecting your duties, my b'ys. I'll see ye'll have a raisonable excuse for going out again, so I will!'

"We slunk to our seats, some of us thankful that no taws were brought into play.

"Next day one of the McKenzie boys gave a 'raisonable excuse' for going out for a drink. 'Very well, my b'ye, take this wid you,' at the same instant handing him a deer's horn. 'And the next wan wants out he'll wait until that deer's horn comes back,' he exclaimed triumphantly. McKenzie wasn't out long when Henry went to sleep again. In a few minutes I heard a low whistle outside. I ventured quietly to the door. The deer's horn appeared through an open space between the logs near the

door. Then I heard McKenzie say in a low tone, 'Come on out.' I opened the door and tip-toed out. 'Is Henry asleep?' inquired McKenzie. I answered in the affirmative. 'All right, then, whistle softly and pass it on to the next one.' That was repeated until there was a dozen of us out and we had an hour's battle with snowballs again, and were all back before Henry awakened. We repeated that every day for several weeks, until at length we grew bolder and remained out all afternoon. Poor Henry lost all control over the school. His drinking sprees became more protracted. Even the trustees, who were very lenient in those days, began to sit up and take notice. However, nothing was done to check him in his downward career until one Saturday night he arrived at his boarding house in a deplorable condition and was found dead next morning. The news of his sudden death came as a shock to the whole community. We grieved over the cause of his death more than the manner in which we had taken advantage of him during school hours. We liked Paul Henry notwithstanding his one great fault which overpowered him, as it did many another man. After the trustees had settled his affairs, there was enough money due him to defray his funeral expenses. The school remained closed a few weeks, when William Munroe was engaged as teacher. Mr. Munroe is now principal of one of the schools of Woodstock. He quickly brought order out of chaos. He had a tactful manner in gaining the confidence of the pupils by engaging in sports with us, which was something new to us, and we rather liked it. It established a feeling of good-fellowship between teacher and pupil and aided materially in increasing our respect for him from day to day.

"I went to William Munroe for more than a

year, when affairs at home necessitated my leaving school at least for a time, as I thought; but the longer I remained at home the more I saw I was needed. My father had by this time quite a bit of farm cleared, and that meant more of a crop to put in, and also he was preparing to build a log house, as it was only a shanty we had been living in.

“The first week I was home was a very busy one. By the aid of the oxen we had the logs drawn to the spot where we were to erect our house. There were no stone foundations built in those days. The four foundation logs were placed upon corner-stones. As a rule those four logs were the only ones hewn on both sides.

“My father and I hewed and placed those bottom logs. We had also taken logs to Demorest’s mill at Harrington to be sawn into lumber for flooring and sheeting. My father manufactured shingles from cedar blocks by means of a ‘froe’—an instrument resembling an axe somewhat, having a short handle held upright when in operation, and driven through the block by the aid of a beetle.

“When all that work was completed we were ready for the raising. We had about twenty-five men. Four corner men were chosen from among them, one at each corner of the building, to hew and square the ends of the logs and place them in position as they were put up. At that raising the four corner men were Kenneth Kerr, John Kerr, William Ross (Shepherd), and Yankee Wilson,—men with muscles of steel, sure-footed, cool-headed under trying circumstances, and expert axemen. When all was ready the logs were forced up on skids by the aid of ‘mullys,’ a stout limb with a crook at one end to fit any log. There was half a dozen of these mullys utilized, two or three men on each mully.

“The men at each end of the log would strive in getting their end up first, to the top of the building. There were shouts of ‘Yo heave!’ as the logs were impelled upward. When the log reached the top of the skids and rolled over on the building it was a critical time for the corner men. The building would shake considerably, testing the poise of the men. Sometimes one end of a log would be forced along farther than the other, and in danger of falling end foremost inside the building, which was very annoying to the corner men.

“I remember, during the race, as they were forcing a log to the top, Duncan Reid gave his end a vigorous push as it reached the top, sending it very near the centre of the building, at the same time shouting in Gaelic, ‘Sciobalt brogach, sciobalt, Tithe Earne beannach!’ (Hurry, boys, hurry, God bless me!) Imprecations of a more or less pungent nature were heaped upon Duncan by Yankee Wilson and John Kerr. Yankee’s language was particularly sulphurous, but it had the effect of cooling Duncan’s ardor somewhat. By six o’clock the building was up and the men were at the supper table. In the course of a week we had the roof in, floor laid and openings chinked with lime and were ready to move in. Great changes have taken place in the last sixty years.

“There is scarcely half a dozen of log houses to be seen in Zorra,” my friend continued, “but although they are dwellings of the past, many a Zorra boy looks back with fond recollections to the days spent in the old log house.”

CHAPTER V.

THE EARLY SETTLEMENT.

When the first territorial division of the province of Ontario was made in July, 1792, the township of West Zorra was unknown and unsurveyed. The first allusion made to it by act of parliament was in 1821, by which Act it was, together with the townships of Nissouri, added to the county of Oxford.

The township was first surveyed by Shubal Parke in 1820.

On December 22nd, 1797; July 6, 1804; January 5th, 1815; October 20th, 1819; January 1st, 1820, 69,068 acres of the lands of Zorra were granted to persons in parcels, mostly of 100 and 200 acres.

Joseph Randell. David Randell, Robt. Roseburgh, Thomas Roseburgh, Samuel Roseburgh, Lewis Evans, Shubal Parke and Thomas Woomack were the only ones to whom was granted as little as fifty acres. Thomas Merritt and James Kerby were the only ones to whom were granted one thousand acres each, and the only one who received above that quantity was Thaddeus Davis, to whom was granted five thousand acres. Previous to 1822, the townships of Zorra, with Nissouri, West and North Oxford were assessed together, at which period their united population was 719 souls. The township of Zorra was first organized in 1822, by a warrant issued by Charles Ingersoll and Peter Teeples, esquires. The first township officers were Joseph Fitch, town clerk; Joseph Fitch and Henry Lairne, assessors, and Alpheus Taft, collector. It

may be of interest to readers to give a copy of the assessment roll for 1822, as far as householders and landowners are concerned.

In East Zorra—Caleb Piper, James Walsh, Alexander McGregor, John Maxwell, Rufus With-ey, John Morrison, Richard Sarvice, Peter McDonald, Hiram Bodwell, Ira Barr, Allen Colbourne, James Jacobs, Jerry Wilson, Hugh Chisholm, Robert Sweet, Curtis Edgerton, Alvin Allen, Wm. Land, Thomas Wait, Isaac Merrill, Stratton Rowell, Robt. Thomson, John Thompson, Richard Lewis, Wm. A. Bunday, Henry Dorman, Joseph Randell, Joseph Brink, Silas Williams, Adam Dodge, Robert Mathews, Thomas Warwick, John Harrington, Ira Fuller, Wm. McKay, Angus McKay, Wm. Clason, David Randell, Wm. Landerlip, Allen Waker.

In West Zorra—Alanson Harris, Ira Day, Daniel Cook, Peter Vanatter, Israel Reed, Abraham Vanatter, Levi Lewis, Alpheus Taft, Leonard Karn, Barnabas Ford, Elijah Harris, Theron Hallock, Robert Ford, Peter Alyea, Isaac Burdick.

The above names include those in East and West Zorra. The two townships were united for municipal purposes until 1845.

At this period, 1822, there were only one hundred and forty-five acres cleared in the two townships. The only taxable house was a hewed log one of Mr. Alexander McGregor's. There were fourteen horses, forty-four oxen, eighty-four cows owned by those settlers.

Israel Reed owned one thousand acres, Joseph Brink, four hundred acres, Isaac Burdick, four hundred acres, the others one and two hundred acres each. The great majority of those early settlers were U. E. Loyalists who left their homes in different parts of the United States to





A BIT OF ZORRA SCENERY.
The Valley, and the Residence of Donald Cameron.



"INVERARY," RESIDENCE OF HUGH McCORQUODALE 2nd. CON.

find new ones in the then Canadian wilderness. Ever since their trek into the forests of this district in 1819-20 they have been an important factor in the maintenance of peace, order and good government, and have set an example of heroic endurance and indomitable persistence. The descendants of the Highlanders throughout Zorra, to-day can well afford to join with the descendants of those U. E. Loyalists in doing honor to their memory.

Two of the earliest settlers from the Highlands of Scotland that we have any record of were William and Angus McKay, who arrived in Zorra in 1820. William McKay before coming out to Canada was captain of a company in the ninety-third Sutherland and Argyleshire Highland regiment. In one of the battles of the Peninsular War his company suffered severe loss in killed and wounded; only a remnant was left. Those who remained were granted their discharge. Some time after that William, with his brother Angus, embarked for America. Upon arriving in Canada they secured work on the Erie Canal, and, after working there for some time, William came to Zorra. Setting down his trunk containing his few worldly possessions on the farm now owned by his son, A. G. McKay, ninth line, he went to work with that determination and indomitable will which characterized those early Highland settlers, built a log shanty, and as there was no means of securing any lumber at that time, a blanket was improvised for a door. Night after night Captain McKay would be awakened from his sleep by wolves pawing at the blanket, and bears and other wild animals prowling about his shanty. For weeks he was isolated back on that bush farm many miles from his nearest neighbor.

Having settled there for some time, he sent word

to his brother Angus, who came and settled upon a hundred acres in that vicinity.

Those two brothers must have realized the great possibilities of this country, the opportunities and advantages open to settlers from the British Isles and elsewhere, who could become landowners themselves in time. We find that Angus returned to Scotland in the spring of 1829 and induced many Sutherlandshire families to come out to Zorra,—among them his aged father, George McKay (Relochan) (the name of the place he came from in Sutherland), and his mother, Isobel McKay. It appears they tried to dissuade her from making such a trip, fraught in those days with many privations, but her answer was, “Na, na, where my laddies go I’ll gang too.” Such was the heroic spirit of Isobel McKay.

Those Sutherlandshire people arrived in Zorra in the autumn of ’29 and settled upon farms in the vicinity and to the east of Embro. They were out only three months when Isobel McKay died. Her remains were the first interred in the old church cemetery. A visitor upon entering the old historic cemetery, and turning to the right, climbing a short distance the slope of the hill, will observe a beautiful headstone. On it the inscription reads as follows: “Isobel McKay. Born April 15th, 1746. Died November, 1829; aged 84 years.” She was born the night before the battle of Culloden. Her father was by trade a blacksmith, and was engaged in strightening scythes for swords for the soldiers of Prince Charles’ army during that ill-fated campaign.

Those early settlers were almost compelled from necessity to leave their native land to escape the covetousness and tyranny of the Scottish landlords, who were rapidly converting the Highlands into sheep farms and deer forests. It was far from

being a pleasure trip across the tempest-tossed Atlantic, and ocean voyages lasting a period of twelve and fourteen weeks.

Landing at Quebec their boat was towed by oxen up the St. Lawrence river, and they entered the vast forests of Ontario,—often only a blazed trail to guide them to their destination,—encountering wolves, bears and other wild animals,—then settling upon their bush farms to face new conditions entirely different from what they were accustomed to,—laying the foundation of our prosperity we are enjoying to-day. Do we not owe them a great deal? Should we not revere their memories? I am certain every young man and woman throughout the Zorras, and those who are abroad, will join with the writer in saying their memories and heroic deeds shall not be allowed to perish.

CHAPTER VI.

DONALD McKENZIE.

When the first ship-load of those Highlanders from Sutherlandshire arrived in this country and made this the land of their adoption, they longed to realize and enjoy here the solemnities of a Scottish Sabbath, a Scottish Church, and a Scottish worship.

For the period of two years, 1830 and '31, these early settlers were holding weekly and monthly prayer meetings among themselves, and it was not until the summer of '32 that a meeting was held,—we know not where it was held, but we know of some of the men selected to carry out their unanimous resolve to build a church. They were George McKay (Relochan), Robert Matheson, John McKay, Alexander Munroe, Squire Gordon, Alexander Matheson. A site for the building was selected on what is now known as the old Logan farm.

As Squire Gordon was the wealthiest man in the district at that time, he was the means, financially, of erecting the log church, the only place of worship in this part of the country at that time. Its dimensions were thirty feet by forty-eight feet. The logs were hewed inside and outside. It was completed in the summer of '33.

The people held their monthly prayer meetings in the church the remainder of the summer. During the winter months they held them in their homes, as there was no stove to heat the church. In the spring of '34 they again held their weekly and monthly meetings in the church.

That spring they appointed a committee to enquire after a minister with a view to permanent settlement. Donald Matheson was appointed secretary of this committee. Upon hearing of the arrival of Mr. McKenzie at Woodstock, the secretary wrote to him, inviting him up. Mr. McKenzie was ordained by the Presbytery of Dingwall in the presence of the Synod of Ross, on the 16th of April, 1834. Dr. McDonald, known as the Apostle of the North, presided, and preached from Acts xxii., 21: "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Receiving the invitation from the secretary while in Woodstock, he decided to come up.

There was no stage, and vehicles were scarce. The roads at that time were not in a fit state to use them. He left Woodstock on horseback and worked his way up by inquiring, until he came to the tighth concession, we know not what lot, where his horse got mired in a bog-hole. He dismounted and tried to assist the horse to extricate itself, but the more the horse exerted itself the deeper it sank in the bog. Mr. McKenzie now saw the necessity of calling for help, which fortunately was not far distant. A family by the name of Murray lived close by. They went by the name of Murray "Bhards." They immediately came to the animal's help. They found it weak, having exhausted its energies before this. They had to call for further help from the neighbors. They built a derrick of poles, and with the aid of chains, ropes and blankets, they at length after a great deal of work got the horse on dry ground.

They marked Mr. McKenzie as a gentleman dressed in broadcloth, wearing a tall silk hat, but they did not know what to make of him. He rarely spoke. They concluded he was a saintly man or he was so full of inward rage that he could

not express himself in language strong enough in finding himself in such a plight. They led his horse to the barn, rubbed it down and warmed a feed of oats for him, and in the course of an hour he was able to continue his journey, and without any more mishaps, arrived at Squire Gordon's that evening, the 18th of August, 1834.

On the following Wednesday he conducted a prayer meeting, and preached the following Sabbath. The hearts of the people went out to him. His sermon was likened to the springing of a cool, clear well in a dry and parched land, and, moreover, he was possessed of a dignified and commanding appearance in the pulpit. In private they found him social and affable. He made a profound impression upon the people. They pressed him to remain, but, wishing to do more missionary work, he proceeded west to London, St. Thomas, Strathroy, Gwillimbury, he being the first missionary over that extended district, and the first doing any missionary work between Hamilton and the Lakes. He returned the following spring and was inducted into the pastoral charge of Zorra congregation June, 1835.

The old log church was the religious centre of a very large district. Many who attended services travelled on foot through the forest, eight, ten, and, in many cases, twelve miles,—returning the same day. On communion occasions they came not only from the Zorras, but from Nissouri, North-Easthope, London, Thamesford, East and West Williams.

On Sabbaths other than communion an English service was held first, followed by a Gaelic service. The minister opened the service by announcing a Psalm, reading over the stanzas he wished to be sung. As there was no choir nor “the kist o’

whusoles " those days, the precentor led the singing, repeating or chanting each line before singing it, on down through the stanzas. Alexander Matheson, Elder, was precentor for the first few years, Donald McLeod taking it up later on.

The singing was followed by prayer. After that a chapter was read, then another Psalm sung. Then the minister arose in his pulpit and began the sermon of the day. In front of the pulpit were seated the elders. The first elders elected and ordained were Robert Matheson, George McKay, John McKay, Hector Ross, Alexander Matheson, Alexander Rose, William McKay and Alexander Munroe.

Mr. McKenzie usually began his sermon in a low voice, but as he proceeded his voice increased in volume until it became a rushing, roaring torrent, drawing the attention of every listener in the church. His sermons were always plain, earnest and practical.

The communions held in those days were different in some respects from what they are to-day. Five days were devoted to it, whereas there are only two now. It commenced on Thursday, which was called Fast day; Friday was day of self-examination; Saturday was day of preparation; Sabbath was day of communion, and Monday, day of thanksgiving. The services on each of those days bore upon the subject of that day, as indicated by the name of the day above given.

The communion in those days was a very sacred and solemn ordinance with those pioneers. Two or three hours before the services, crowds would be seen coming from all directions, a great many from those places I have named. A family in good circumstances and fortunate enough to own a wagon brought their neighbors. Often as many as ten or

twelve would be crowded in, seated on rough boards placed across the box of the wagon. The sermon and prayers would be appropriate for that occasion. Then came the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The communicants did not sit in their pews as they do to-day while partaking of the bread and wine. The centre seats were removed and a long table was placed down the centre of the church covered with a white linen cloth. Before the minister invited communicants to take their places at the table the fencing of the tables took place, that is, the communicants were solemnly warned. Only those living lives of true believers had a right to it. Those living in sin partaking of the sacrament were guilty and solemnly debarred.

When the communicants had taken their seats, the table address was delivered, with words of encouragement and comfort to those believers. They were reminded of the solemn vow they had taken and were commanded to go forth into the world as followers of the Saviour.

Mr. McKenzie was upon these communion occasions assisted by some neighboring minister.

The chief reason they held that custom of fencing the tables was to preserve the dignity of that sacred ordinance and to make a clear distinction between true believers and those who were unworthy. Great was the hospitality extended to visitors upon that occasion. Those who came from a distance were given a warm welcome and pressed to remain over until after the Monday thanksgiving services were over. Many of those families in Zorra during the communion season entertained as many as ten, twelve or more people. That would be considered generous hospitality at the present time, but it is on record that Mrs. John McKay, a woman of great faith, on seeing a number of

strangers present at these communions, would accost them, saying, "Come with me. I've room in my house for ten of you, and in my heart for a hundred." Those people entertained would have pleasant and profitable talks together for mutual edification. After dinner the men would go out and stroll through the fields and woods for quiet meditation and often prayer, while the women, after assisting in household duties, would have quiet spots about the house or garden. Acquaintance-ship sprang up between people from different parts of the country at these communions, which ripened into lasting friendship; and many of those pioneers looked forward to those seasons for the pleasure of seeing and conversing with those friends again.

One of the religious events of those days was the catechising. There would be a day set apart in a community for that exercise. It was usually announced during services the preceding Sabbath. That pulpit intimation set the people of that neighborhood all astir. At the house in which the catechising was to take place, preparations were made for the event. The floor was scrubbed, furniture was dusted, perhaps a bed or some other article was removed to make room for the gathering. The people of that section, as well as the family where the catechising was to take place, pored over the catechism questions and the Psalms during their spare moments before the day arrived. Even the school was closed on that day. When all had arrived and were seated the meeting was opened with prayer.

Although Mr. McKenzie presided at these meetings, asking an occasional question, some elder present put most of the questions. Those questions were followed each by one more difficult than the preceding. The man of the house was the first one

asked, as a rule. Prompters, those well versed in the catechism, were in demand in aiding some faltering one. That was done in a whispered tone so as not to be heard by the minister or presiding elder.

When all were tested as to their knowledge of the catechism, the meeting ended with the benediction. Often Mr. McKenzie had two of these meetings in one day, travelling as far west as Thamesford, besides preaching two sermons, Gaelic and English, each Sabbath to a larger congregation than has ever fallen to the lot of any other minister in the county of Oxford. Besides his various ministerial duties, he was often called upon to settle disputes among his parishioners, and many a Zorra youth whose intention was to take a course at college was generously assisted in his Latin and Greek studies before entering upon his college course.

During his ministry he was influential in leading thirty-eight young men to consecrate their lives to the ministry,—truly a remarkable record. Is it any wonder that Zorra holds her head proudly erect when she thinks of that record? And well she might revere the memory of that good man. Although he is no more with us, he still lives in the lives not only of these ministers but of the men in other professions in which Zorra boys hold front rank.

In 1836 the old frame kirk was erected in Embro. It, being more central and a more commodious building being required for a growing congregation, the old log church was abandoned as far as preaching in it was concerned. It was used only occasionally for a weekly and monthly prayer meeting. Even the old frame kirk was found too small to hold the crowds during the communion season.

They would repair to Dent's woods, which is now the slope of the hill between Embro and the corner of the sideline south.

Although Presbyterianism played an important part in the religious life of Zorra in the old days, they were not the only body of worshippers at that time. The Wesleyan Methodists were the first to enter Embro, meeting in the old Temperance Hall, the upper storey of a frame building situated on the corner of Commissioner and Argyle streets. A Mr. Nasmyth emigrated from Scotland in 1832 and settled in Embro. He formed a Methodist class and held meetings at his own house. This Mr. Nasmyth was a public-spirited man, taking a great interest in affairs of this district and Embro. He assisted Captain Wm. McKay in drilling the Zorra volunteers during the McKenzie rebellion.

For many years the old school house at Cody's Corners was used as a meeting house by the Episcopal and Wesleyan Methodists and Baptists. Three services were held each Sunday.

The first pioneer Methodist preacher was a Mr. Corson, who preached at the different meeting-places throughout Zorra. He was followed by Rev. Edmund Stoney.

In those early days considerable coolness existed between the Methodists and Presbyterians. The Methodists characterized the Presbyterian sermons as dry preaching, and the Presbyterians themselves as being too stiff and formal. The Methodists were looked upon by their Presbyterian neighbors as lacking in reverence in their worship, and were spoken of as the "puir Methody buddies."

But happily that cool rivalry is a thing of the past: a broader, more liberal view is taken,

CHAPTER VII.

PIONEER POLITICS.

Our pioneer fathers did not take a very active interest in politics. Their arduous toil in grappling with the giants of the forest from sunrise until sunset, through the heat of summer and the cold and frosts of winter, did not give them time to engage in political controversies. True, at town meetings, when the Zorras were part of the Brock district, before they were divided, crowds would assemble annually in front of Saunder's hotel, east on Commissioner street, Embro; but the district commissioners were nominated and re-elected, year after year, until it became almost a matter of form. Obviously they were content to leave the district affairs in the hands of old and experienced men, who, no doubt, and to the best of our knowledge, served the people of the district faithfully and acceptably.

On Dominion election days, it appears, they were equally indifferent. The candidates for office sent out conveyances of various kinds to bring in the voters. Very often that is done at the present day, which does not redound very much to our credit, with all our boasted advantages of daily newspapers and other press literature giving all phases of political life, so that we may be enabled to think and act for ourselves. A great many of these advantages were denied our fathers in the old days. About the only glimpse they would have of our political life would be at the polls. During the days the polls were open, sometimes party feeling ran high; but

when all was over and the voters were conveyed back to their homes to again face the difficulties and hardships incidental in those days to the life of the pioneer, the election was all but forgotten.

We find that the commissioners who sat in District Council for 1849 were J. M. Ross, Angus Munroe, John Harrington, E. Bodwell, F. Malcolm, R. H. Campbell. Previously to this, Donald Matheson and Squire Gordon had served in the council. Squire Gordon was also Justice of the Peace. There were no Justiciary Sitzings nearer than Ingersoll. He went there occasionally. In 1837 and '38 the Zorras took a small part in the rebellion of that time. Most of readers are familiar with the history of that rebellion; it created intense excitement throughout Upper and Lower Canada; volunteers were ordered for drill at many points throughout the province, Zorra among the rest. Two hundred men reported at Embro, and Crittenden's distillery was used as a drill shed. As muskets were scarce, stout poles were substituted by some. For a week they were drilled by Captain William McKay and Lieutenant Nasmyth, until word came that the rebels had taken Toronto and were marching on to Woodstock.

The Zorra company, reinforced by another, and headed by a piper, set out for Woodstock. They remained under arms for a few days, when word was received that the rebels were defeated, and McKenzie had fled. When they were paid for their time under arms, they returned home.

About the only surviving member of that company is John McKay (Vhury). He was about the youngest member of the company and was very fond of playing mischievous pranks, and it appears military discipline did not have much effect in checking his playful propensities. In the early hours of a bitter cold morning, while the company

was in camp at Woodstock, John took a pair of shoes belonging to an officer, filled them with water and placed them outside. When the officer awoke and made search for his shoes he found the insides a solid mass of ice. "Ha! Ha!" he exclaimed, "that was Johnny 'Vhury'! He is bad. That was Johnny McKay!"

In the thirties, previous to the union of Upper and Lower Canada, the elections were held at Martin's old hotel at Beachville. After the union of those provinces, the first parliament was from July, 1841, to December, 1843. The election for the county was held at Woodstock on the 15th of March, 1841. The candidates were Francis Hincks and Peter Carroll. Hincks was elected by a majority of thirty-one.

A short time after he was obliged to vacate his seat and return for re-election. The election, which was contested by John Armstrong of Zorra, took place in July, 1842. At that election the polls were open three days. When closed the poll books showed a majority for Hincks of two hundred and eighteen. This parliament did not sit out its full term, but was dissolved in 1844.

At this time a new election law was passed, the principal features of which were, the requiring of a poll to be open in each township, and also simplifying the election oath. It was in this year, 1844, that the Zorra Presbyterian Church joined the Free Church Movement as a result of the Disruption of the old Established Church in Scotland. Only a very small portion of the congregation remained loyal to the Established Church.

The second parliament was from December 20th, 1844, to 28th July, 1847. The election, which was first held under the provisions of the new election law for this county, was held in October, 1844.

The contest was between Francis Hincks and Robert Riddle. Nomination was held in the court house, Woodstock, on the 18th of October, and the polls were opened in the several townships on the following week. Zorra's polling booth was the old school house in Embro. The result was a majority of twenty for Mr. Riddle. The vote in the district of Zorra was two hundred and twenty-five for Riddle, and one hundred and eighty for Hincks.

The following year, 1845, the Zorras became separate municipalities, but the affairs of the two were carried on by the district commissioners.

The next year, 1846, an amendment was made to the District Council Act, by which councillors were not allowed more than six shillings three pence for each day's actual sitting,—the British currency was then in use,—and also power to appoint annually one of themselves Warden, and to appoint their own clerk and treasurer. In those days the district council met in the court house, Woodstock.

The next general election took place in 1847. Sir Francis Hincks again became a candidate and was opposed by Peter Carroll. The nomination was held in the court house, Woodstock, on the 30th of December. On the 1st of January the polling booths were opened, and although Mr. Hincks had a majority of three hundred and forty-six he was disqualified for being absent in Europe, and Carroll was duly elected, but was unseated by a majority in the House.

Mr. Hincks was obliged to return for re-election, and in April of 1848 the nomination took place at Woodstock, when he was unanimously elected representative of the county. This parliament set its full term, during which further amendments were made to the election law, by which sheriffs of the several counties are returning officers of their re-

spective counties, and township clerks returning officers of their respective townships, polls to be open two days, from nine o'clock in the forenoon until five in the afternoon. The following year, 1849, districts were abolished. Further amendments were made to the District Councils Act, by which the reeves and deputy-reeves of the several townships composed the county council.

In 1850, the councils for the two municipalities of the Zorras were elected. Those two townships were now separate municipalities. The township of West Zorra council were, Donald Matheson, reeve; Angus Munroe, Benson Pelton, J. M. Rosss, Alex. Clark, councillors; Alexander Ross, collector; Alexander Wood, clerk and treasurer; A. Allcock, assessor. East Zorra council,— John Harrington, reeve; William Wilson, R. H. Campbell, J. Brown, Alexander McKay, councillors; William Fraser and William Rowell, assessors; George Forbes, collector; Adam Marshall, clerk and treasurer. One of the motions set down in the minutes of the first meeting of the West Zorra Council was that they purchase a dozen tallow candles. It appears they held their meetings at night.

The following is a copy of a by-law drafted by that first council:—

“Whereas, it is necessary and expedient to pass a by-law to confine sheep in the township of West Zorra the whole year: Be it therefore enacted by the municipal council of the township of West Zorra, constituted and assembled under and by virtue of an Act of the Legislature of the Province of Canada, entitled, ‘An Act to provide by one general law for the erection of municipal corporations and the establishment and regulation of police in and for the several counties, cities, towns, townships and villages in Upper Canada,’ that from and

after the passing of this by-law, all sheep within this township shall be confined the whole year. Given under the hand of the reeve and the seal of the corporation, this seventeenth day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty.

“Alexander Wood,

“Township Clerk.”

In 1851 Donald Matheson was again elected reeve, with councillors, J. M. Ross, Benson Pelton, George Gordon, Alex. Clark; assessor, Alex. Wood; collector, Alex. Ross; Alex. Wood, clerk and treasurer.

East Zorra,—John Harrington, reeve, with councillors, William Wilson, R. H. Campbell, J. Brown, William McKay; William Fraser and William Rowell, assessors; George Forbes, collector; Adam Marshall, clerk and treasurer.

One of the most important events taking place in Zorra in 1853 was the inauguration of the Embro and West Zorra Agricultural Society: Edward Huggins, president; John Fraser, secretary; D. R. McPherson, treasurer.

Meetings were held in January of each year for election of officers. Exhibitions were held in October of each year on the green a little west of where now stands the Commercial Hotel, Dillon's store and Farmer's Bank. Besides the annual meet in October, prizes were awarded for the best field of roots in the township, and at plowing matches. A banquet was held on the night of the annual exhibition, when prizes were distributed, speeches were made by the directors and other prominent men from East and West Zorra and Woodstock.

Another event in 1853 was the erection of the first Episcopal church in Zorra,—a frame structure, costing five hundred and eighty-three dollars. It stood on the summit of the hill at the side line

south of Embro. Rev. B. Bristol was the circuit minister at the time.

In 1854, by an Act of Parliament, the money from the clergy reserves went to secular purposes, and Zorra, greatly to her credit, expended her share of the money on her schools.

Previously to the general election in 1854, Oxford was divided into two distinct ridings, North and South. The election in the north riding of that year resulted in the unanimous choice of Donald Matheson, Embro. He had been reeve of the township, warden of the county, and was appointed clerk of the Division Court when it was established in 1844. This parliament sat the longest of any in several years.

While there, Mr. Matheson was instrumental in raising Woodstock to the status of a town, in 1857.

At the next general election, Mr. Matheson retiring, George Brown of the *Toronto Globe* was elected by a large majority over D. G. Miller.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOCIAL LIFE.

“Those early settlers were compelled through necessity to secure work elsewhere in order to earn money enough to pay their taxes and to obtain some of the necessaries of life,” said my friend, Donald Cameron, as he resumed his narrative one beautiful June evening as we sat under a spreading maple near his house.

“Their little crops, grown among stumps in the clearings were insufficient to meet those expenses. The markets in those days were not so conveniently near as they are to-day. The little wheat that was grown was taken to the mill, often upon their shoulders, to be exchanged for flour,—the small quantity of oats for oatmeal. They also grew a few field roots, including potatoes. They plowed what soil they could get among the stumps, sowed the seed by hand and harrowed it with a large branch of a tree, until those old triangular harrows came into use. However, those settlers discovered a way out of their difficulties by finding employment during the haying and harvest in some older and more settled district.

“In the months of July many of those men from Zorra went down and engaged in the haying and harvest on ‘the plains,’ in a district in the vicinity of Paris and Brantford, walking all that distance, about a two-days’ journey, carrying their cradles and scythes with them.

“Upon arriving there and after a good night’s rest, they were put to work mowing the hay. By the time that was cut, stacked or mowed away, the

wheat would be ready. There were large farms in that district at that time. Some of those farmers had a hundred acres of wheat to cut. When the wheat was ready a hundred-acre field would be divided into four sections of twenty-five acres. A gang of nine men, four cradlers, four binders, and a stooker would be put into each section. When they were ready to start, one cradler would take a stroke or two in advance of the others; he would be followed by a second, then the third, then fourth or rear man, each followed by a binder, and one man to set up all the sheaves.

“Although those cradlers were not abreast, they must keep the same clip, that is, they must swing their cradles in unison; if one should miss his clip he would lose ground with the others, and would have some difficulty in regaining his position, but it did not often happen that any of those men would miss their clip, as they were all experienced cradlers. But I remember one instance that occurred during one of those harvest days on the plains, when two cradlers fell behind. The gang was made up of four Indians and five white men. I do not know the names of the Indians; they were from the Brantford reserve. The cradlers from Zorra were Simon Vanatter and Yankee Wilson; the binders, John McLean and Duncan Reid, with John Campbell as stooker. Wilson and Vanatter were two of the best cradlers who went to the plains,—both sinewy, muscular men, who could swing their cradles all day as though it were child’s play.

“Those two concocted a plan whereby they would outdo the Indians. In the morning Yankee was first to strike in, followed by Simon. They took such mighty sweeps with their blades that long before the noon hour the Indians had missed their clips and began to fall behind, and before nightfall

the Indians were left far in the rear. The following morning they failed to appear. During the forenoon the foreman came 'round and inquired as to where the Indians were and to why they didn't come to work. 'Search me,' Yankee answered, 'they must have got that tired feelin' I cal'late.' 'Give us white men to work with,' said Simon, 'and you'll get your wheat cut.' The foreman did so, and in the course of an hour nine men went to work in their section but at a considerably slower pace than the day before.

"It was a strenuous time with those men on the plains, walking all the distance, cradling and binding from early morning until nightfall, sleeping in a barn or hayloft at night. They would be employed for about two weeks there, then returning to harvest their own little crops.

"One evening in the summer of '56, a few weeks after my father returned from harvesting on the plains, we had finished our chores about the house and stable, and were seated in the kitchen in various attitudes, when we heard a knock at the door. My father answered by saying, 'Come in'; the door opened and in walked Yankee Wilson, Sandy Reid, Hector Ross, and, by all the saints in the calendar! a great stalwart negro carrying something in a sack under his arm! I had never seen a negro before, and I can assure you I quickly got behind the scenes, as it were, by crowding into the farthest corner of the room. My father advanced to meet them, addressing them by their names. Yankee turned half 'round and said, 'How'd'y, Mr. Cameron? You've never seen a colored gentleman before, I cal'late.' My father replied that he hadn't. 'Wall, I've brought one down with me to-night. He drifted into these parts the other day, and say! he's a

corker to play the fiddle.' The negro came forward and clasped my father by the hand, saying, 'Good even'in, Mistah Cam'on. A beautiful even'in, so it is,'—at the same time showing two pearly rows of teeth in a broad smile. He was a magnificent specimen of physical strength, about six feet tall, broad shouldered, and when engaged in conversation had a habit of rolling his eyes about.

"'It's pretty dry weather we are having whatever,' said Sandy Reid. 'I had no trouble starting a heap of logs afire to-day,' he continued. 'Are you clearing much this fall?' my father inquired. 'Quite a bit. I have been trying to hire Hec. here,' said Sandy, looking towards Hector Ross, 'but he says he is thinking of going down to Embro to work. But I think I can persuade him to stay whatever,' Sandy added. Hector shook his head doubtfully. 'I am getting tired of clearing this summer, and I think I'll strike out for Embro,' Hector replied. My father was about to inquire of Hector what he intended doing, when he was interrupted by Yankee, who was saying, 'Pull that there fiddle out, Bill, and give us a tune.' That was the first time I heard the negro's name was Bill, and ever after he was known as Black Bill, the first violin player in these parts.

"Slowly but tenderly Bill took the violin from the sack and began to tune up. The hair of the violin bow was black; his violin was made of pine wood and had a sonorous tone that could be heard a great distance. When he got it in tune, he tilted his chair against the wall and began to play. A broad smile lit up his dusky face, and his eyes rolled about, showing the whites of them clearly in the gloom. We hadn't lit the candle, and the room was rather dark. How vivid that scene comes before me: my father sitting cross-legged, watching Bill

playing his violin; Yankee occasionally rolling his quid from one side of his mouth to the other, his eyes dancing with delight at the music; Sandy Reid staring out of the window; and Hector Ross keeping time to the music with his foot. Bill played Old Zip Coon (the young people of to-day call it by the vulgar name of 'Turkey in the Straw') over several times before he finished; then, giving two or three strokes with the bow across the open strings to ascertain whether it was still in tune, he began at another that is known by the name of Old Dan Tucker, playing it over about a dozen times. When he ceased Yankee roared out, 'Play that one over again! It's a dandy.' Bill proceeded to play it over again with greater vim than before; Hector stamped his foot louder upon the floor; my father changed his position on his chair; Sandy Reid now gazed at Bill instead of the window. Yankee deposited his quid in the fire-place and took another fresh one from his plug, sat down and began beating his foot on the floor, but I noticed it wasn't in time to the music. Bill ceased playing with one tremendous rasp with his bow on the last note of the tune. Yankee pretty nearly leaped from his chair. 'By the great Sammy! isn't that great, Mr. Cameron?' he almost shouted. My father replied that it was a great treat to him. 'Say, Bill! Sing us one of them there songs of yourn,' Yankee continued. Bill showed his white teeth in a smile, and began singing with the accompaniment of his violin:

Uncle Peter got drunk the other night;
He looked out de window and saw a sight;
This am de story he told me
Of all the animals he did see:
The lion went a-courting with the kangaroo;
The little ant tramped on the elephant's toes;
The mouse and the bear both fell in love,
With a little white weasel with a wart on his nose.

“ Bill sang one or two more verses which I do not remember. His singing was followed by a chorus of laughter which fairly shook the house. When it subsided, Yankee spied me. ‘ Come here, sonny,’ he said. I came forward for the first time. Bill’s music had reassured me that he was not so terrible after all. ‘ By gum, I hearn you’re gettin’ to be a great hand with oxen.’ I said I was beginning to handle them pretty fair. ‘ What do you think of the music ?’ he inquired. I answered that I liked it fine. ‘ Say!’ Yankee continued, ‘ he is not a bad kind of a cuss for a nigger, is he ? By Gum! I like the sound of that fiddle. Come down to my place some night and hear him play.’ I answered that I would like to if my father would let me. ‘ Well, now, do. We’ll give you a time, I can tell you.’ I felt flattered at Yankee’s invitation and wondered if my father would permit me to go. They sat and talked for about an hour. Bill played his two tunes again, when they arose and prepared to go, extending to us a pressing invitation to return the visit. My father declared it was too dark these nights to go through the bush; he would go some moonlight night. ‘ But the boy can go if he likes,’ my father added. I was delighted to be permitted to go. The tunes Black Bill played rang ceaselessly in my ears for a week. At length the evening arrived that I was to go down to Yankee’s. It was very dark until I arrived at the clearing where Yankee’s shanty stood. Yankee was a squatter, as I previously informed you. His shanty stood on the south-west corner of the farm now owned by Ephraim Meadows. One part of the house was used as a work-shop; Yankee was a Jack of all trades; he manufactured ox-bows, sleighs, carts, axe-handles and other articles useful in those days. At one end of the shanty was a lean-

to. There was a drop of four or five feet from the floor of the shanty into that apartment. In it Yankee kept calves at certain seasons of the year. In answer to my knock the door was opened by Yankee. 'Hello, sonny! You got here, I see. Come right in. Then blamed kids of mine are around somewheres.' I was soon surrounded by Duncie and his brother, who fired questions at me so rapidly I could scarcely answer them.

" 'I suppose you saw the niggar down at your place the other night,' Duncie said. 'Dad says he is an escaped slave from the South.' 'Will they be coming after him?' I inquired. 'I doubt if they could find him up here,' Duncie's brother answered. 'Is your father afraid they'll come up here after him,' I inquired of Duncie. 'Oh, Dad don't give a dang,' Duncie replied.

"I had picked up a new ox-bow, when Yankee stepped over to where I was sitting.

" 'You must be a handy man to make these bows, Mr. Wilson,' I said. 'Well, I reckon,' answered Yankee, with that peculiar drawl of his, 'I am kind of general factotum araound here, sonny. What do you think of this for a job?' he remarked, picking up a new axe-handle. 'Isn't that a beauty?' I confessed it was. Just then Bill began to tune up his violin, and we moved to the other part of the room. Seated about the room were Sandy Reid, Hector Ross, Jim White, Neil Matheson, and one or two more I didn't know. All were quietly waiting to hear Bill play his two tunes. He tilted his chair back against the door which opened out into the calf pen. When he got all his strings in perfect tune, he proceeded with Old Zip Coon, playing it through a number of times. He was greeted with applause when he finished; then rolling his eyes about he started his plantation song:

Uncle Peter got drunk the other night;
 He looked out the window and saw a sight;
 This am de story he told me
 Of all the animals he did see:

“When he ended Sandy Reid exclaimed, ‘Play us a Strathspey, Bill, and we’ll have a reel.’ But evidently Bill didn’t know anything about that class of music. His two tunes, ‘Old Zip Coon’ and ‘Dan Tucker’ completed his repertoire. ‘Can’t do it, Mistah Reid, can’t do it! That’s beyond my recompensibility,’ answered Bill. ‘Ole Zip Coon’ll do, won’t it?’ he inquired of Hector. ‘Oh, maybe it will, but I don’t exactly like it for a reel,’ said Hector. Bill began to play the tune, and four of them leaped to the floor and began to execute a reel, accompanied with snapping of the finger’s and shouts of ‘Suis’ (Keep it up). The more they shouted and snapped their fingers, the faster and louder Bill played. His playing and movements attracted my attention away from the dancers. He swayed his huge frame from side to side in time to the music. In an instant, and before anyone could give him warning, the latch of the door came undone with the movement of his body. It suddenly swung open, precipitating Bill backward down among the calves. The dancing ceased, and there was a general uproar. Duncan Reid,—whom I forgot to mention was there,—he rushed to the door, exclaiming in Gaelic, ‘Tithe Earra Beannach, mearachd au’ drastha’ (God bless me, what is wrong now?). Yankee peered out into the darkness of the lean-to, saying, ‘Well, by the great Sammy! Where did the blamed cuss disappear to?’ Presently Bill appeared at the door, carrying his fiddle in one hand and his broken chair in the other.

“‘How did it happen, Bill?’ inquired Hector, at the same time almost convulsed with laughter.

‘I doan’ know, Mistah Hec,’ answered Bill. ‘It must hab bin de devil come an’ unlatched dat doa, fo’ befo’ I knew what happened I done gone down among dem calves.’ ‘By Jove! You might have broken your neck, Bill,’ was Jim White’s consoling remark.

“Bill was visibly frightened, for his eyes rolled about more than I ever saw them do before. When order was restored, another reel or two were danced, and Yankee and Sandy Reid recited some of their experiences down on the plains. I became sleepy and arose to go home. ‘Not goin’ yet, are you, sonny?’ said Yankee; ‘but if you’re bound to go, Duncie will go apiece the road with you.’ At that Duncie ran and got his cap and accompanied me part of my way home. We laughed nearly all the way that Duncie went with me as we thought of Bill falling in among the calves.

“It was the autumn of this year the first threshing machine came into this section of Zorra. Neil Matheson purchased it in Hamilton. It was a box-shaped affair, standing on four uprights, containing a cylinder, but open on both sides. The sheaves went in at one end, and grain, straw and chaff came out at the other. It was run by horse power. On the extreme end of the rod from the horse power was a drive-wheel, to which a belt was attached from there to the shaft of the cylinder.

“Simple and imperfect compared with the machines of to-day, it was a great improvement and labor-saving invention compared with the flail.

“One day early in October we received an invitation to spend an evening at Alexander Ross’s. There was to be a piper there that night. My father inquired the name of the piper of the boy who brought the message. ‘His name is Johnny McKenzie,’ the boy replied, ‘Little Johnny they call

him.' 'Hauch!' my father replied. 'I know now who he is; he's a son of Shock McCaonich.'

"My father was visibly agitated on hearing there was a piper coming to the neighborhood. I besieged him with questions concerning the bagpipes, as to what kind of an instrument it was and how it was played on. 'Have patience, my lad. 'You'll see and hear them to-night. It's grand music,' my father added. 'My father and uncles were all pipers in the old country.'

"That evening before we prepared to go up to Alexander Ross's I was driving our cow to pasture when I suddenly heard a high thrilling note. It would die away, then I would hear it again. It seemed nearer than before. Then I would hear more peculiar sounds. I ran back to where my father stood with one of my sisters. 'Did you hear a peculiar sound?' I asked him. He replied that he didn't. 'There it is,' I exclaimed. 'Listen.' My father placed his open hand behind his ear to catch the sound better. 'Ah! that's the bagpipes,' he answered. My sister began to dance around in her ecstasy, clapping her hands and exclaiming, 'Oh! the pipes! the pipes!' We could hear them quite distinctly by this time, until they came directly opposite Alexander Ross's place, where they ceased altogether. All our family arrayed themselves in our best to go up. We were anxious to hear the pipes as they were something new in Zorra then.

"When we arrived at Ross's, quite a number were already there. Alexander Ross greeted my father with 'Camar-tha-siu?' (How are you?) My father answered 'Ra-mhath' (Very well). We were introduced to the piper, who was trying new reeds in the drones of the pipes. My sisters and I got behind the older people in a far corner of the room. They were nearly all carrying on a con-

versation in Gaelic, waiting for little Johnny to play a tune on the pipes. Getting the reeds to suit, he placed the pipes on his shoulder. The first blast frightened me and I crouched down in the corner. He tuned the drones to three notes on the chanter, the low and high A notes and the E. After working the drones up and down until he got them perfectly in tune, he struck up a spirited march, walking back and forward the length of the room. That frightened feeling wore off and new emotions stirred me. The march he played caused my blood to leap through my veins. Soon he changed into a lament, a weird, melancholy air. In listening to it a new feeling took possession of me; my desire was to get down behind my sisters in the corner and cry, but presently he broke into a lively Strathspey and reel. I felt as though I could do or dare anything. My father and Johnny Ross (Shephard) secured a partner each and went through some of the intricate steps of a Scotch reel. That reel was followed by about a dozen more.

"They were free in those days from much of the conventionalities of modern society. There was little or no class distinction among them as are sometimes seen to-day. There was more sympathy; their interests were in common.

"At gatherings of that kind they never hesitated in giving vent to their feelings by an occasional 'suis,' which might perhaps shock people of to-day having modern ideas how an assembly should be conducted, and yet in those days I've never seen anything approaching rudeness or uncouthness at any gatherings where ladies were present.

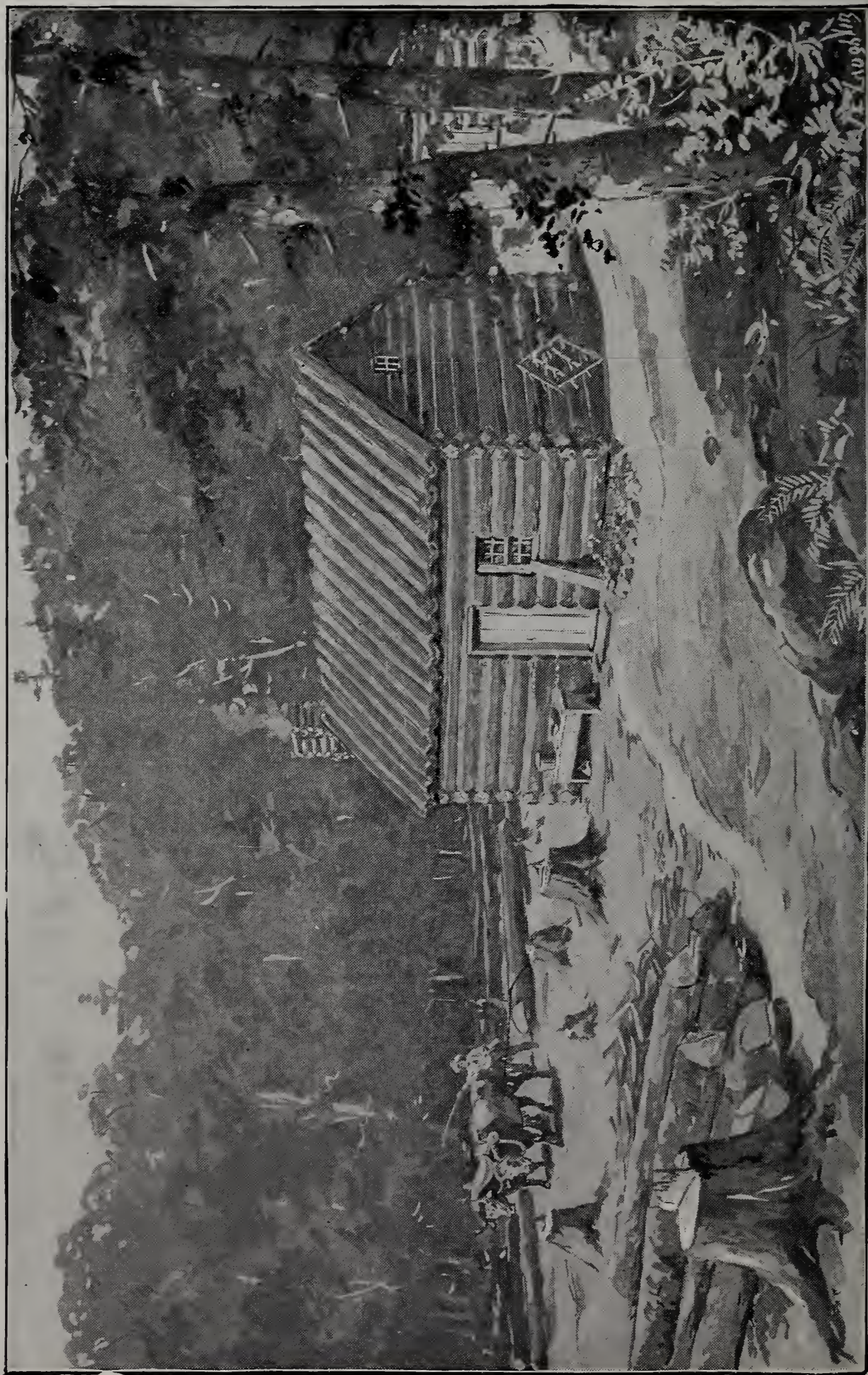
"After one of those reels my father requested McKenzie to play a certain tune which appeared to be a favorite with him. While he was playing the piece I inquired of Sullivan Ross how he enjoyed

the music. He replied that it was a rare treat to him ; that he wished he could perform a little on the instrument ; but how little did we know that night that Sullivan Ross would bring back to Zorra the championship of America and gold clasp, from the great Caledonian meet held at Lucknow in 1876, and which was never wrested from him !

“ Little Johnny McKenzie remained in the neighborhood a week and we had two or three more gatherings of that nature. At one of them I had the temerity to try a reel with the older people, but it proved an unsuccessful attempt, and to prevent a repetition of my ungraceful performance I expressed a wish to Sullivan Ross that he come down at the noon hour and whistle some Strathspey tunes for me to practice some Highland fling steps to. At one or two parties I attended the following winter I managed to go through a reel very creditably, although Johnny Ross (Shepherd) informed me I should continue practising in order to have a more graceful movement and to master some of the more difficult steps, but I gradually forsook that accomplishment, and turned my attention to practicing on the violin.

“ Two years previous to this, on the eighteenth of March, 1856, the Highland Society of Embro was organized. In September of that year they received their charter from the Highland Society of Hamilton.

“ On the 23rd of July, 1842, Sir Charles Bagot and Sir Allan McNab were commissioned and authorized to form a branch of the Highland Society of London, England, in Canada. Before that was carried out, Sir Charles Bagot died. Sir Allan McNab was in consequence the sole party in whom the above-mentioned powers were vested, as granted by commission of the Highland Society of London,



EXTERIOR VIEW OF A PIONEER'S HOUSE.

—From "Pioneer Life in Zorra," by Rev. W. A. MacKay, B.A., D.D.

By kind permission of the publisher, William Briggs.

to grant a charter on the 12th of February, 1848, to the Highland Society of Hamilton and Canada West, declaring said society a branch of the Highland Society of London, for the purpose of preserving the language, martial spirit, dress, music, literature, antiquities and games of the ancient Caledonians, together with other objects therewith. When the Embro branch was organized, John McKay was elected president, James Munroe recording and corresponding secretary.

“The Society held four quarterly meetings in the year, namely, on the second Monday of February, May, August and November. A director's meeting was held every first Monday of each month at 8 o'clock p.m., and the annual meeting on the second Monday of February of each year for the election of office-bearers for the ensuing year, fourteen in number. Five, at least, were to have a conversational knowledge of the Gaelic language, to serve from the day of election, till the annual meeting of the following year. The gathering of the Society took place in September each year at Embro on the green to the west of where now stands the Commercial Hotel, Dillan's store and Farmers' Bank.

“They had a very beautiful and costly banner. It required two men to carry it at the head of their parades. On it the motto was, ‘Clan nau Gaidheal au guailibh a cheile.’

“The gatherings held in September of each year became celebrated throughout the province. Great crowds would gather to see the games and dancing, and to hear the music. John Tait, of Embro, a tin-smith, was one of the best Highland dancers. George Forbes, Angus Kerr, William McLeod of East Zorra, Donald ‘Bain’ McKay, were some of the greatest athletes.

“In January of each year a ball would be given by the Society in the old hall, Embro. The membership fee for each year was one dollar, but some contributed as much as ten or twenty dollars,—among them, Col. Skinner of Woodstock, who was a very enthusiastic member of the Society.”

CHAPTER IX.

CHANGES AND THE FENIAN RAID.

In the year 1857 the old frame Presbyterian church, Harrington, was erected; but the inception of that now large and flourishing congregation may be dated back to 1856, when John Fraser, a merchant of the village of Harrington, and the originator of that congregation, induced Rev. William Meldrum of Puslinch, but who at that time was doing mission work in Vaughn township, to come up and preach to the people. Mr. Meldrum did so and preached on a Sabbath in a bush back of where the church now stands.

Although no definite steps were taken in extending a call to Mr. Meldrum, a mutual understanding existed among the people of that district, to the effect that as soon as a church should be erected, they would ask Mr. Meldrum to assume the pastoral charge.

Mr. Fraser again came to their assistance by presenting them with a plot of ground on which the church now stands. Early in the summer of '57 the church was built, and Mr. Meldrum accepted the call as pastor of the new congregation. In June of that year the church was formally opened by holding communion services, which were conducted by that old and respected pioneer preacher, Rev. Daniel Allan, of North Easthope.

The first elders inducted were George McLeod, Hugh Rose Ross, John McLeod and William McKenzie.

The village of Harrington, at one time called Springfield, but subsequently named by Francis Hincks after his friend and supporter, Squire Harrington of East Zorra, was laid out in 1855 by D. L. Demorest and surveyed by Wm. Smiley, P.L.S. During the winter of 1857 and '58 a great revival took place at Youngsville. Crowds came from all over the township. The ministers of different denominations became greatly interested. The school house at Youngsville was found too small to contain the crowds, and the meetings were transferred to the old Temperance Hall, Embro, continuing until the spring of '58.

In 1858 the village of Embro became a separate municipality by Act of Parliament. The meeting of the first council was held on November 8th. The members of that first council were: John Dent, reeve; Robt. S. Mann, John Short, John McDonald, Donald Matheson, councillors; John Fraser, clerk; D. R. McPherson, treasurer.

It appears the councils in those days had the power to elect a reeve from among themselves. It was moved by Robt. Mann, seconded by John Shortt, and resolved, that John Dent be reeve.

It was about this period the first buggy appeared in Zorra. It was owned by a William Murray of the third concession west of Embro. It was a cab-shaped vehicle with a high seat in front and costing three hundred dollars.

In February, 1859, the United Brethren Friendly Society of West Zorra was organized. Meetings were held in Embro. Time of meetings was first Friday of every quarter. The officers were Donald Sutherland, Wm. Geddes, Alex. McKay, David Ross.

In the same year a Loyal Orange lodge was instituted in Embro on April 1st. The officers were:

M., Isaac Wallace; D. M., John Blair; Secretary, L. H. Swan, M.D.; T., John Rutherford; C., Kenneth Mann; Jas. Barclay, Com.; E. Cody, Com.; Wm. Huggins, Com.; Wm. Jameson, Com.; Jas. Campbell, Com.

About this time the first reapers were used in Zorra. They were so constructed that the table could be detached and then used as a mower.

In 1860 Braemar post office was established. Mails were received and dispatched two days in the week; John Forbes, postmaster.

The same year a company of volunteers was organized in Zorra and Embro under the name of Embro and West Zorra Highland Rifle Company. It numbered fifty-five privates. The officers were Isaac Wallace, captain; Neil Matheson, lieutenant; Hugh Ross, ensign; L. H. Swan, surgeon. The non-commissioned officers were Hugh Matheson, color-sergeant; Alex. McKenzie and Wm. Ross, sergeants. The company was destined soon to be called out in defence of the country.

In 1860 steps were taken with a view to erecting a larger church by the Zorra Presbyterian congregation under Donald McKenzie. The old kirk was found too small to contain the ever-increasing influx of people from Scotland and elsewhere who belonged to that denomination.

The following year, 1861, the present edifice known as Knox Church, was built. It is a large, substantial structure of brick with a handsome spire, erected at a cost of nine thousand dollars.

Up to this period great changes had taken place throughout the Zorras. Embro was now a thriving village with a population of five hundred and fifty, and quite a number of important branches of industry.

There were three flouring and grist mills and a

saw-mill; a woollen factory, owned by John McDonald; also a tannery, James Henderson, proprietor; a bakery carried on by James Brewer; shoe shop and furniture wareroom, owned by James Adams. D. Callahan, John Dent, John Forest, Hugh Graham, Angus McKay, D. R. McPherson, Jas. Mann, John Murray, Kenneth White, merchants; Alex. McKenzie, Jas. McNeil, Wm. Midgley, Jas. Gunn, shoemakers; Charles Brewer, photographer; John Fraser, conveyancer; Wm. Geddes, Colin McDonald, John McKay; wagon-makers; Asa Saunders, Henry Gammond, Donald McDonald, hotelkeepers; Jas. Campbell, David Ross, Alex. McDonald, Roderick McDonald, Jas. Munroe, Donald Murray, Wm. Murray, Donald Tait, carpenters; Wm. Walsh, cooper; Wm. Grant, John McKay, Jas. S. Munroe, tailor shops; Daniel Loucks, millwright; Daniel McDonald, Angus McAuley, McDonald & Son, Alex. McKay, George Ross, blacksmiths; George Ferguson, Wm. Gordon, Alex. Gunn, Hugh Gunn, laborers; Robert Geddes, Wm. McKay, plasterers; W. E. Sutherland, undertaker and upholsterer; Geo. Duncan, M. D.

There were two schools with an attendance of pupils numbering one hundred and seventy-five.

Up to this period the forests of Zorra had been slowly but surely retreating. There were now, in 1860 and '61, seventeen thousand, nine hundred and ninety-three acres under crops. Cash value of farms in dollars, one million two hundred and eighty-one thousand seven hundred and two. Cash value of farm implements in dollars, fifty-two thousand, five hundred and forty-six. Total value of live stock in dollars, two hundred and two thousand six hundred and one. Produce of orchards and gardens in dollars, eight thousand three hundred and sixty-five. There were ten schools in West Zorra:—

Bain's school, lot 10, concession 2; Hugh Fraser, teacher.

Cody's school, lot 5, concession 4; Elizabeth Ross, teacher.

Brooksdale school, lot 26, concession 4; Robt. R. Sutherland, teacher.

Innis's school, No. 18, lot 31, concession 7; Hugh Ross, teacher.

Gordon's school, lot 33, concession 5; William Munroe, teacher.

McIntosh's school, lot 16, concession 7; J. L. Murray, teacher.

McKay's school, lot 9, concession 8; Catherine Ross, teacher.

Pelton's school, lot 20, concession 3; James Yool, teacher.

Turner's school, lot 1, concession 2; Lachlin Sutherland, teacher.

Walker's school, lot 5, concession 1; Andrew McKay, teacher.

In 1860 there were eighty frame houses in the Zorras, and thirty-one brick and stone.

The directors of the West Zorra and Embro Agricultural Society for 1862 were, John Youngs, president; Robert Forbes, vice-president; James Dawes, Wm. Loveys, J. B. Wilkinson, Thomas McCombs, Angus Matheson, Wm. Oliver, E. Huggins, Wm. Stewart, Chas. Kitmer, directors; John Fraser, secretary and treasurer.

The population of West Zorra in 1862 numbered three thousand six hundred and ninety-one.

The population of East Zorra in 1862 numbered four thousand five hundred and ten.

The number of acres under crops in East Zorra in 1860 and '61 were eighteen thousand seven hundred and nineteen. Number of acres under orchards and garden, two hundred and ninety-eight.

Cash value of farms, one million four hundred and sixty-four thousand nine hundred and forty-nine dollars. Cash value of farm implements or machinery, sixty-one thousand two hundred and sixty-seven dollars. Total value of live stock in dollars, one hundred and ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-one. Produce of orchards and gardens in dollars, six thousand one hundred and fifty-nine. Children attending school in 1861 in East Zorra, nine hundred and one.

In 1863 the Embro and West Zorra Highland Rifle Company entered the Twenty-second Battalion, Oxford Rifles as Number Two Company.

In 1865 the Strathallan post office was established; John Lapin, postmaster.

Early in the year '66 great excitement prevailed throughout Canada. A host of Fenians were about to cross the border into this country. There was a call for volunteers at many points to repel the invaders. Among the number who were ordered out was Number Two Company, Twenty-second Battalion Oxford Rifles, under Captain Duncan.

On March 8th, Major Hugh Richardson's order reads as follows:—

	Oxford Rifles Headquarters,
To Capt. Duncan,	Woodstock, 8th March, '66.
Embro:	

Your company ordered out. Have full strength on parade in two hours after receipt of this. March to Beachville station and report from there to me by special messenger by three o'clock, p.m., to-day.

By order,
Major Hugh Richardson,
Command'g O. R. at H. 2.

Promptly on time Captain Duncan left Embro with fifty-five stalwart sons of Zorra. Needless to say, they presented a splendid appearance,—those men marching out in defence of their country with

never a thought of the dangers they might have to encounter or the hardships they might have to endure.

Perhaps it was the inspiring sight of these men which prompted an old lady resident of Zorra to utter the saying which is proverbial, that "the Feenians may tak' Toronto and they may tak' Hamilton and they may tak' Woodstock, but they'll no' tak' Zorra."

ORDERS NO. 2.

To Capt. Duncan,
 Embro:

Captain will parade his men at Beachville at 9.30 to-morrow morning, and joining the company from Ingersoll, march to Woodstock.

Every man of the company must be accounted for.

Major Richardson,
Major Command'g.

ORDERS NO. 3.

Captain Duncan will march his company at 3.30 a.m. to-morrow morning to the Great Western station, from thence by train to Windsor.

Major Richardson,
Major Command'g.

9th March, '66.

Captain Duncan's company with others were stationed at Sandwich, for frontier service, to be on the alert for any of the invaders who might cross at that point. The following are the detachment orders:—

Sandwich, March 11, '66.

To the officer of the day to-morrow, Captain Henderson; next for duty, Captain Duncan:

The officer commanding the detachment desires to direct the attention of the officers commanding companies to the following extracts from battalion and detachment orders:

The following will be the hours for parade and drill until otherwise ordered:

On Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, early morning parade without arms at 7 a.m.; commanding officers parade with arms at 10 a.m., and afternoon parade with arms at 2 p.m. On Tuesdays and Fridays for battalion drill at 9.30 a.m., and on Saturdays early morning parade at 7 a.m.

No non-commissioned officers and men of the detachment are to pass the toll bar on the Sandwich and Windsor road or to extend their walks beyond a mile from their quarters in any direction without a written pass from the officer commanding the detachment.

No non-commissioned officer or man is on any account to pass over to the American shore or to go on board the ferry boat.

Whilst stationed there their time was fully occupied in drilling parades, forming guards, piquets and performing other military duties. They remained under arms until late in June, and before returning home, a resolution was forwarded to the captains of the different companies stationed there and signed by the mayor and clerk of the town.

At a meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Sandwich, held on Saturday, the 23rd of June, A.D., 1866, it was unanimously resolved that the thanks of the Council be tendered to the volunteer companies lately stationed here under the command of Captains Duncan, Anderson and Meloche, for the noble, patriotic and prompt manner in which they responded to the call of His Excellency, the Governor-General, to defend the province against a horde of robbers and plunderers, and for the gentlemanly, orderly and sober conduct of the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of these companies during their stay here; and that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the respective captains of such companies.

(Signed)	J. Woodbridge, Jr.,	Chas. Baby,
	Clerk,	Mayor.

The surviving members of Number Two Company, Twenty-second Battalion, under Captain Duncan during the Fenian raid of '66 are:—

Major Loveys, Ensign John Ross, Jno. McKay, Alex. Campbell, Donald Bruce, A. D. Murray, A. C. McKenzie, Mat. Coulter, D. M. Bayne, Wm. Northey, Robert Munroe, Jno. Laycock, Chas. McKay, A. G. Murray, Arch. McNeil, Jas. Andison, Alex. McKay, D. Munroe, D. Ross, Jno. Sutherland, Thos. Huggins, Jno. A. McKenzie, Alex. Munroe,

Thos. Douglas, Michael Dent, Lieut. Hugh Ross, A. G. McKay, Geo. Green, Daniel McIntosh, Hugh Ferguson.

In 1867 Embro's general business was still further increased by additional mercantile establishments and workshops; a foundry was carried on by Farnsworth & Murray; Hugh McKay, potash manufacturer; Charles L. Straubel, saddle and harness shop; John Henry Thorne, carpenter and joiner and village clerk; McDonald & Urquart, wagon and carriage makers; D. K. Perry, dealer in dry goods and groceries. There were at this time three physicians: George Duncan, M.D., Henry Adams, physician and dealer in drugs; L. H. Swan, M.D.

Donald Matheson, J.P., was postmaster and clerk of Division Court.

CHAPTER X.

CHURCH EVENTS.

In the fall and winter of 1869-70 Evangelists Russell and Carroll began a series of evangelistic services in Knox Church, Embro. These services were extended over a number of weeks, with the result that some four hundred made profession of faith. Great interest was manifested in those meetings, people coming for miles around to hear those two evangelists. Toward the close of those meetings objections were raised by certain members of the church to some of the doctrines as taught by Messrs. Russell and Carroll. It became so pronounced that the session saw the advisability of discontinuing the meetings. When the announcement to this effect was made, differences of opinion were pronounced, and the relations between the parties became so strained that a separation was necessary, and those who championed the cause of the evangelists withdrew from Knox Church and gathered in various places to hear those men, sometimes in private houses, halls or school houses. Efforts were made by the presbytery to effect a reconciliation, but in vain; and soon the evangelists found it necessary to effect some kind of organization. Arrangements were made whereby the Old Kirk was made available for their use, and for over a year they were taught by Evangelist Henderson. Then George C. Needham, an evangelist of repute, was invited to the office of pastor. The Congregational Union, which met at Montreal, heard a deputation from Embro which was sent there, and ac-

cepted them as a company of believers ; and on May, 15th, 1872, they were organized into what is now known as the Ebenezer Congregational Church of Embro.

In 1870 the Methodist church at Brooksdale was erected. During that same year, Rev. William Meldrum resigned from the pastrate of Knox Church, Harrington, who for thirteen years had faithfully discharged his duties as pastor. On the 4th of July the following year, 1871, Rev. Daniel Gordon of Indian lands, Glengarry, was inducted as pastor of the congregation.

In March, 1872, George Leslie McKay, an old Zorra boy, better known as Formosa McKay, landed at Tamsui, Formosa, to begin his great missionary work. I need not allude to that work in detail, as every Zorraite is already familiar with what Mr. McKay accomplished on that island. His work there proved to be one of the most remarkable achievements in the history of modern missions.

The late Mr. McKay was the first sent out by the Canadian Presbyterian Church for foreign mission work.

Early in 1873 Rev. Donald McKenzie resigned from the pastorate of Knox Church, Embro, having had charge of that congregation thirty-eight years, ending a long and useful pastorate.

Who can estimate the mighty influence wielded for good by Mr. McKenzie, and which still lives, and will live for generations to come ?

August 19th, 1873, Rev. Gustavus Munroe was inducted into the pastoral charge of Knox Church, Embro. The elders at that time were Alex. Murray, Hugh S. McKay, John R. Ross, Robert McDonald, Farquhar Noble, George Adams, Angus McKay, Murdock McKenzie, D. R. McPherson and Jas. Mann, clerk of session.

On the first day of January of this year, Maplewood post office was opened; Christopher G. Dean, postmaster.

In 1874 the Episcopal Methodist Church, Embro, was erected.

In July of that year Youngsville post office was established, mails received and despatched bi-weekly.

Since 1860-61 Embro and other villages throughout Zorra had been making slow but substantial progress. In addition to those doing business in Embro in 1860-61, there were now two newspaper offices, "The Review" and "The Planet," the former published by Alexander Hay, "The Planet" by Geo. W. Dawson. Also E. J. Cody, general store, and a flax mill owned by John Honeyman; Samuel Henderson, veterinary surgeon; Reuben Tait pump-maker; meat market owned by George Matheson; a Temperance House, N. Vanslyke, proprietor.

The village of Harrington had a population of two hundred. Its general business consisted of two hotels, John McLeod and Arthur Blemerhassett, proprietors; Robert Heron and William Jordon, merchant tailors; Simon Lampman saw-mill owner; Jas. McKay, flour and grist mill; Angus Kerr, dry goods, groceries and hardware store; Matthew Morris, cabinet-maker and upholsterer; George Forbes and John Riebling, wagon-makers; Kenneth White, tin shop; Adams & Rowe, harness, boot and shoe makers; a cheese factory, operated by Angus Kerr; Jas. McKay, mason; John McKenzie, George Murray, Arthur Rounds, laborers; Donald Reid, postmaster. An oatmeal mill a mile east of the village was owned by Geo. Sutherland & Son. A Methodist church was erected in Harrington in 1871.

Braemar had a population of fifty: Alexander Anderson, postmaster; Alex. McKay, merchant;

Braemar Hotel, Alex. Sutherland, proprietor; a saw-mil owned by McKay & Murray; W. A. Gordon, blacksmith; a school with an average attendance of seventy pupils.

Brooksdale, situated on lots 25 and 26, on the fourth and fifth concessions, received its name through the instrumentality of the late Dr. McLeod, who recommended that name to the Government when application was made for its post office. In 1875, John Bagrie, postmaster; Geo. Kerr, shoemaker; J. R. McKay, blacksmith; Elisha Myrick, general store.

Strathallan had a population of one hundred. It contained two stores, James Lappin and Mrs. Evans, proprietors; marble works, owned by John Lappin; Donald McKay, blacksmith; Albert Lyndal, shoemaker; Jas. Lappin, hotel-keeper; a Wesleyan Methodist church; a school with an attendance of sixty pupils, John Davison, teacher.

South Zorra was a post office on lot 14, twelfth concession, five and a half miles from Woodstock; Thomas Cross, postmaster.

Innerkip, in East Zorra, had a population of two hundred. The village contained two stores, two hotels, blacksmith and wagon shop; a school of eighty pupils; two churches, Presbyterian and Church of England; several lime kilns, owned by Callan Bros.

About the year '74 the first binder appeared in Zorra. It was owned by Mr. Whaley, on the old Joseph Reid farm, south of Brooksdale. It had a three-foot cut and the sheaves were bound with wire. It required three horses to draw it. The cost was three hundred dollars.

About by this period many of the old log houses were being replaced by several frame and brick

houses, but the majority of frame barns were without foundations.

In 1876 the present school in Embro was erected. Scrimageor Brothers, of Stratford, were the contractors.

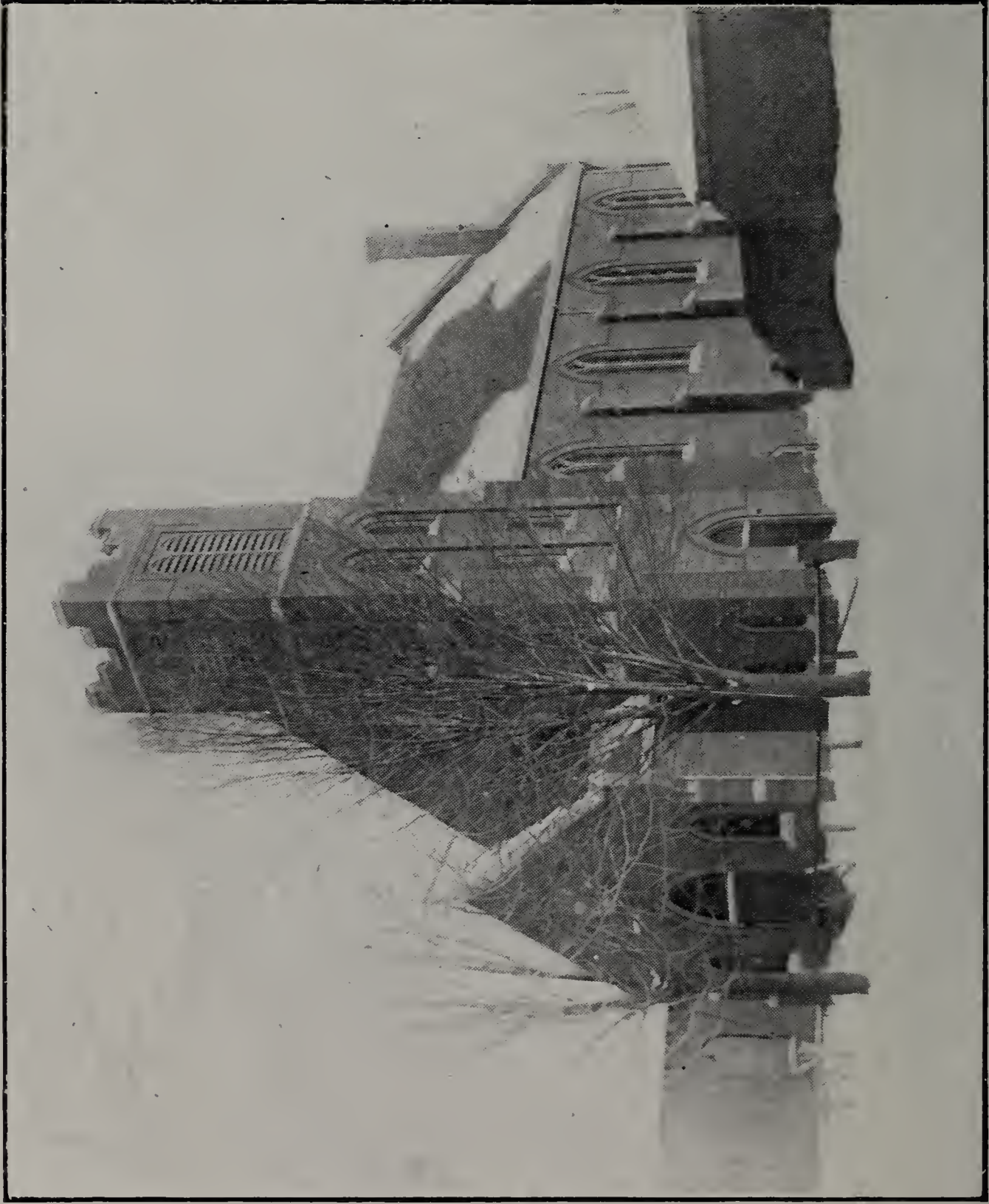
In December of '77 the new Congregational church, which was erected that summer at a cost of six thousand dollars, was dedicated for public worship, the preachers on that occasion being Rev. J. A. R. Dickson and Robert McKay. Rev. John Salmon was pastor at that time. For four years previously to this, services were held in the Old Kirk.

In the year 1878, Brooksdale and Burn's Church, East Zorra, were united as one pastoral charge. Meetings in Brooksdale were held in the school house. The united congregation was ministered to by probationers. Burn's Church, at one time known as the Black Ash Church, was situated on the tenth concession of East Zorra for many years, but later was removed a little further south.

In 1879 a charter was secured to build a railway from Woodstock to Lake Huron by way of Embro and St. Marys. A bonus of sixty thousand dollars was voted by St. Marys and ten thousand by Embro. The terms of the charter made it imperative that the road be completed by a certain time. Too much time was devoted to minor details of the scheme, and before any work had been done, the time granted by the charter had expired and the project was dropped.

In 1880 the "Courier" newspaper office was established. The "Courier" has been growing in popularity as a local paper year by year.

The 1st of October, 1881, Embro Star lodge, No. 229, I. O. O. F., was organized, the charter members being, Thos. Huggins, J. G. Anderson, Samuel



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, EMBRO.

Ditchfield, S. S. Willison, Angus McCauley, Wm. Gould, Geo. Jamieson, H. Adams, Wm. G. Nor. Embro Star, No. 229, continues to prosper, and many new members are added to the roll each year.

The same year Rev. Robert Scott was called to the pastorate of Brooksdale and Burn's Church.

In 1883 the Presbyterian Church, Brooksdale, was erected, a handsome brick structure, capable of seating two hundred and fifty. The opening services were conducted by the Rev. J. K. Smith, of Galt.

In September of the following year, 1884, Zorra's highly respected pioneer pastor, Donald McKenzie, passed away at Ingersoll. His remains were interred in North Embro cemetery, in accordance with the wish that he be laid to rest near the scene of his life's work.

On July 1st, 1885, the Agricultural Grounds in Embro were opened. The exhibitions, held in October of each year, have since taken place there. The crystal palace, used in winter as a rink, was also erected that year.

By this time the Zorras have made great advancement in agriculture, especially the dairy branch. This branch of farm industry has been doing much for the benefit of this district, inasmuch as, while they are receiving higher returns as the products of their farms, the soil is every year becoming more enriched under pasturage, being invigorated by its rest from cultivation.

At this period quite a number of factories are in operation, and there are new ones being erected year by year, and the exports are gradually increasing.

In 1889 a private bank was established in Embro, owned and managed by Col. Jas. Munroe.

CHAPTER XI.

ZORRA'S BRAIN AND BRAWN.

In the year 1890 Rev. Daniel Gordon retired from the pastoral charge of the Harrington congregation, having had charge nineteen years.

For two years, until 1892, the congregation was without a permanent minister, and during that time the church was renovated.

In May, 1892, Rev. A. G. McLaughlin was unanimously called and inducted into the pastorate.

At the time of Mr. McLaughlin's advent, the Harrington congregation was in a deplorable state, financially and otherwise. There was a spirit of unrest and disquietude prevailing among the people. But not long after Mr. McLaughlin was settled as pastor, success marked the career of Harrington church. An old debt was wiped out, the church renovated, and a handsome new manse erected. A large donation towards the century fund was raised. Two organs were installed, one for the Sunday school held in the basement. A great change was wrought in the affairs of the church in a few years. Instead of jar and discord, perfect unanimity prevailed, and much of that can be attributed to the wise and tactful hand that was at the helm. Mr. McLaughlin was a born leader of men, a faithful pastor, beloved by every one in the congregation, and to-day the congregation of Harrington is one of the most flourishing in the county of Oxford.

In June of that year, Rev. G. C. Patterson assumed the pastoral charge of Knox Church, Embro,

having succeeded Mr. Munroe, who resigned in June, 1890. The elders at that time were Jas. Smith, Farquhar Noble, Angus McKay, Jas. Mann, Murdock McKenzie, Donald Sutherland and Hugh S. McKay.

On the 31st of January, 1893, a call was extended to Rev. J. D. Ferguson by the Brooksdale and Burn's congregation, Rev. Robert Scott having died two years previously.

During the summer and autumn of this year, the town hall, Embro, was erected, Youngs and Cansey being the contractors. It has a seating capacity of four hundred, with apartments for a library, reading rooms and Division Court.

The host of professional men Zorra has turned out is something marvellous. Time or space does not permit me to give the names of any of those men, for they represent so many different callings: Professors of colleges, doctors, lawyers, civil engineers, high school teachers, members of parliament and the legislature, and scores of ministers of the gospel. Zorra is justly proud of such an array of brainy, many of them brilliant, men.

But isn't it a peculiar, human propensity to accord little honor to a prophet in his own country? While we should honor those who had left their native land and become shining lights in other lands, should we be blind to the honor due those others, who remained with us, standing as stalwart landmarks for the inspiration of their own and succeeding generations? But even in this home field, and at this day and date, when so many strong men stand out in bold relief in the prospective of memory, one finds some difficulty in deciding who held the strongest claims to honor. But among those, we might safely refer to Dr. George Duncan,

who, through a long life, daily radiated from his large heart his sympathy and love for his fellow-men and his staunch patriotism for his country. Receiving his medical diploma from the hands of Lord Elgin, his long professional career was in full accord with this royal initiation. After bearing faithfully the heat and burden of the day, he whiled away a long and peaceful even among his friends and his music and his bees,—beloved even until the last by old and young.

Another name that young Zorraites cannot well afford to forget is that of Hugh Fraser. Contending throughout his whole youth with pioneer difficulties and privations; seizing with alacrity upon every scanty chance that unwilling Fortune sent him; working his way through school; teaching at first for the princely salary of one hundred dollars per annum, and with his savings from this and the proceeds of his vacations spent in mowing, cradling, and binding; working himself by slow but determined degrees up the rungs of his chosen ladder, he finally became school inspector for the township. His pen, too, was a facile in Gaelic as in English, and in 1885 he received his Gaelic diploma from the Celtic Society of Montreal. He spent his closing years on the beautiful farm-home which he had acquired through his assiduous toil, and passed away in 1898, bequeathing to us the memory of his perseverance and industry.

Possessing the same sterling, independent qualities, and yet of a somewhat different type, was John Pitt, of Harrington. Born in the West Indies of Welsh descent, he inherited the old British independence of thought and love of liberty which marked his attitude in all local and municipal affairs, in which he took a deep and lively interest and made him a power among his fellow-men. Were John

Pitt alive to-day, how fervidly would he denounce the knuckling and graft of political and municipal life of our day !

Is that true to-day which Wordsworth says ? —

—“ We must run glittering like a brook,
In the open sunshine or we are unblest;
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in Nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,—
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.”

And what more shall I say ? Time and space would fail me to tell of John Fraser, founder of Harrington Church, mercantile pioneer, a leader in municipal affairs, a patron for years of agricultural societies and interests; or of Donald Matheson, J.P., Division Court Clerk, M. P. for North Oxford for a term, and Warden for many years, and a disinterested adviser and helper to the early settlers; or of Robert Abernethy, who led Zorra in its songs of praise and stood as a worthy example of highest citizenship; or John Matheson (farmer) — quiet and unassuming, but known throughout Zorra for unvarying piety and strength of character.

While Brain is mightier than Brawn, and the pen must supercede the sword, and Zorra, with the old Scottish reverence for learning, is proud of her rich harvest of scholars and scholarly men, yet Zorra, too, with the Scot's well-known love of manly strength and physical prowess, has been justly proud of her big sons who have proved themselves worthy of their ancestry in feats of brawn and muscle.

In 1893 the Zorra tug-of-war team won the championship of America at the World's Fair, held

at Chicago, on that date, from teams representing Canada, United States, Great Britain, Belgium, France and Germany.

The Zorra tug-of-war team was composed of five members and two officers. The late James Sutherland, M.P., was president; E. L. Sutherland, captain. The active members were Robert McIntosh, anchor man; William Munroe, Ira Hummason, Robert McLeod and Alex. Clark. The team began first to be noticed in 1881. During that year they had several friendly contests with neighboring townships, and although on several occasions they were met by much heavier men, they were always able to pull their opponents over the line. Among the contests they had might be mentioned that with the Dereham men at Ingersoll in 1881,—a team that averaged twenty pounds apiece more than the Zorra team. For four consecutive seasons did the Dereham team compete unsuccessfully with the Zorra boys.

Several contests took place at Woodstock, on one occasion with Brantford men, on another with the Lucknow giants, and again with an East Zorra and Woodstock team. On each of these occasions the West Zorra team were the victors.

Mr. Jas. Sutherland, president, was connected with several Highland Associations, Clan Sutherland among the rest, and through these societies he became aware of several tug-of-war teams that were causing considerable of a sensation in New York State, chief among them being a team from Buffalo and one from Rochester. He conceived the idea that the Zorra team could take the laurels from any of them. Accordingly, on the 3rd of August, 1888. the boys, headed by their president, started for Buffalo, where for the first time they earned for themselves notoriety abroad. Buffalo was the first

team faced by the Zorra team, who appeared diminutive compared with their antagonists. The gallant sons of Zorra showed their Highland blood and completely vanquished the Buffalo team.

The Rochester men were the next met. The first time they were pulled over the line so suddenly that they opened their eyes, as if awakened from a dream, and called a foul, which was not allowed by the judges. The second was like unto the first. A rousing cheer from the throats of ten thousand American supporters rose in behalf of the Canadian boys who had gained so complete a victory, for which they were awarded a handsome silver tankard and well-filled purse. It is needless to say that Mr. Sutherland came home with his boys feeling the proudest man in Canada; and well he might, for theirs was a great victory.

For the next two years nothing was done more than now and then a friendly contest with some neighboring team, until the spring of 1890. The Highland Association team of Chicago challenged them for a contest to take place at Elliott Park, Chicago, some distance from Chicago, on the 23rd of August. The Zorra men immediately accepted the challenge, and went to Chicago on the date named, but by some means or other no fair contest took place. The signal used for starting, the Zorra boys were not accustomed to, and they hardly got a chance to tighten the rope, although it was quite evident to the spectators that, if strength to strength were the conditions of the tug-of-war, the Zorra men would have no difficulty in pulling the Americans over. Hundreds of Canadians flocked around the Zorra team, urging them to challenge the Chicago team for a square pull, to take place in the County of Oxford, at an early date. This they did, and Chicago took them up. It was first arranged that

the contest should take place at Woodstock on October 1st, which was the date of the County Agricultural Exhibition. Seeing, however, that the chief actors in the scene were residents of Zorra who would naturally have special interest in Embro, the board of directors of the West Zorra and Embro Agricultural Society met and resolved to make strenuous efforts to capture the noted event for their fall exhibition, which was to take place on October 10th. The directors voted large sums of money towards defraying expenses and offered a valuable medal to the victors. Their object was gained that the contest should take place at Embro on October 10th.

The West Zorra and Embro Agricultural Exhibition is always looked on as a leading event of the year by the farmers, and in many respects is as good as, if not better than, any in the county.

On the afternoon of the 10th about four thousand people had congregated, the chief attraction being to witness the great contest. The Chicago men were fine, muscular-looking men who felt confident of an easy victory. The Zorra boys, remembering their former victories at Buffalo and Lucknow and other places, and also being encouraged by thousands of Canadian spectators cheering them on, resolved to die hard.

When the teams were ready for the pull, and as they stood side by side, they presented a very fine appearance, indeed. When both teams were ready for the pull, Col. Munroe, in a clear voice, gave the signal for starting. In less than one minute the Chicago men were pulled over the line. The next part of the contest, however, was a most remarkable trial of strength and endurance. Both teams got fairly set in their pit holes, and a greater exhibition of strength to strength has been seldom witnessed.

For fully twenty-five minutes it was hard to say which team would gain the day,—when all at once the bagpipes struck up which roused the Scotch blood of the Zorra team, and immediately they began to gain the rope, inch by inch, until at the end of thirty-five minutes they had it, the required distance. The Highland Association team never for a moment gained an inch of the rope. The scene that followed is not easily described. The air was rent by the cheers of thousands, everyone trying to get a word in or a shake of the hand with the Zorra boys; while the Chicago men, who appeared to be pretty well fagged, took in the situation good-naturedly and acknowledged their defeat. At this juncture, Hon. Oliver Mowat, who had watched the contest with the greatest interest, delivered a short address, saying, among other things, that he felt proud of the pluck displayed by his worthy constituents. The medal they had so well earned was presented to them at a banquet which was given in their honor by the West Zorra and Embro Agricultural Society on St. Andrew's night.

No further contests of any importance took place until the year 1893, when at the Chicago World's Fair they won the championship of America and silver cup, which has never been wrested from them.

There are only four of the team now living, Mr. Hummason having died in 1905.

Sir Oliver Mowat, having received an appointment as Minister of Justice in the newly-elected Laurier Cabinet, Andrew Pattulo was elected representative of North Oxford to the Ontario Legislature.

In 1898, Col. Munroe retired from the command of the Twenty-second Battalion. For thirteen years he had been Lieut.-Colonel of that battalion,

and during all those years, with one exception, he went to camp for annual drill with the regiment up to full strength. Since its formation it never attained greater efficiency and strength than when the Colonel was in command. Since his retirement he has been placed on the staff of the Brigade as Supply Officer and Quartermaster-General of the First Infantry Brigade. For forty-six years Col. Munroe has been identified with, and taken an active interest in the volunteers and militia: truly a remarkable record.

In 1901 an electric light plant, owned by Col. Munroe, was installed in Boxall's mill, Embro, and is run by water power, and generates enough electricity to light the whole village.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NEW ERA.

In January, 1904, in consequence of the death of Andrew Pattulo, Col. Munroe was elected for North Oxford to the Ontario Legislature.

The following year, 1905, the Ontario elections took place, and Col. Munroe was again elected with a substantial majority. In May, 1905, Rev. A. G. McLaughlin retired from Knox Church, Harrington, much to the regret of the people. In September of the same year, the congregation of Harrington extended a call to Rev. A. H. Kippan, who was inducted and assumed the charge on the 12th of October of that year. The Harrington congregation was very fortunate in securing Mr. Kippan as pastor. All branches of work in the church have been brought to a high state of efficiency through his untiring efforts. As a pulpit orator he is unsurpassed.

In July, 1905, Mr. J. D. Ferguson, of Brooksdale and Burn's churches, resigned, and seven months later, Rev. S. M. Whaley was inducted on the 6th of February, 1906.

In June, 1906, Rev. Mr. Patterson retired from the pastorate of Knox Church, Embro. He was succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Barbour in May, 1907.

A branch of the Traders' Bank was established in Embro in May, 1906, and a branch of the Farmers Bank in 1908.

In 1905 a company known as the St. Marys and Western Ontario Railway Company, was incorporated for the purpose of building and operating an

independent road from Sarnia through St. Marys to a point on the main line of the C. P. R. between Woodstock and London, passing through the Zorras and Embro. The officers of the company were as follows: President, Jas. Chalmers; vice, D. R. Ross; secretary and solicitor, J. W. Graham; treasurer, H. L. Rice. The board of directors were: E. L. Sutherland, T. O. Robson, David Bonis, F. E. Butcher, Archie Baird, Jas. Chalmers, D. R. Ross and H. L. Rice. This temporary board entered into an agreement with the C. P. R., relative to the construction and operation of the road between Embro and St. Marys, the road to be completed by July 1st, 1908. By-laws were submitted to East Nissouri, West Zorra and St. Marys, and Embro, fixing a bonus from these municipalities: St. Marys, forty thousand dollars; Nissouri, twenty thousand dollars; West Zorra, fifteen thousand dollars; and Embro, five thousand dollars. The by-laws were submitted and carried with substantial majorities in September, 1906. On May 25th, 1907, the first sod was turned, and the road was completed on July 1st, 1908.

With the building of this railway a new era has dawned upon Zorra and Embro. Better railway facilities had long been needed to aid and quicken commercial progress. Zorra and Embro were never so prosperous as they are to-day. In journeying through the Zorras a traveller sees on every side well-cultivated farms and beautiful residences with well-kept lawns, where once stood the forest and the settler's log cabin. Where once stood the settlers' old log stables there are now large bank barns with stone and cement foundations. Where once roamed the deer and the wolf, we see herds of well-bred cattle and some of the choicest horses to be seen in Ontario, apple orchards, waving fields of

grain and hay, interspersed with woods of maple, beech and elm.

Embro, with a population of nearly one thousand, with her beautiful residences and shaded streets, appears to the visitor an ideal little town of unsurpassed beauty.

The Thames river winds gracefully around its eastern boundaries, supplying excellent water power more than sufficient to run two flouring mills and an oatmeal mill,—the North Embro Roller Mills, owned and operated by G. H. Boxall, who also now owns the electric light plant; the Scotia Flour Mills, owned by Mr. Wm. Hamilton; the Embro Oatmeal mills, owned by D. R. Ross. Mr. Ross needs no introduction. He has been connected with most commercial enterprises in Embro during the past thirty or forty years. He has taken an active interest in everything tending to improve and upbuild his town. He has had a wide experience in municipal affairs; is president of the Cereal Milling Company; and is treasurer of Knox Church. In connection with his business interests he has been an extensive traveller, and sees in Embro the nucleus of a thriving town.

The mercantile business of Embro is carried on by the following enterprising merchants: Thos. Porter, druggist; W. J. Dillane, dry goods and groceries; E. J. Cody, the oldest established general merchant in Embro. Mr. Cody has officiated as clerk and treasurer of Embro for the past thirty years. Other merchants are: John Fairbarn, grocer; Wm. Geddes, hardware; Hector Sutherland, furniture dealer and undertaker; W. H. Beaver, merchant tailor; Thos. Holihan, dry goods and groceries; C. H. Munroe, dry goods and groceries; Mr. Slater, boots and shoes; A. Riddle, meat market; Wm. Karn, barber; D. Sutherland and J. W. Gordon,

harness-makers; Graham McKay, Andrew McDonald and Geo. Creighton, blacksmiths; McLellan & Son, jewellers; Thos. Fillmore, baker and confectioner. There are two hotels: the Albion, conducted by Mr. Wm. Cherry, and the Commercial, managed by Mr. Hugh McInnes. Physicians, Dr. Green, Dr. Adams, Dr. Sutherland.

Has Embro a great future before her in her newly-awakened life? Undoubtedly. She has now every favorable facility for growth and expansion: a splendid location, and an enterprising and ambitious population, a flourishing rural environment, and excellent railway facilities. But while pressing on in the pursuit of growth and prosperity, let the aspiring little town, and the townships of which she is the hub, not forget the pure and lofty traditions of brotherly love and manly character handed down to us by our grand old pioneer forefathers.

July 5th, 1909.



HECKMAN
BINDERY INC.



MAY 90



N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962

